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INDIA WAS FIGHTING THREE ENEMIES, SAYS ARMY ON CHINA ROLE DURING OP SINDOOR

Pak was used 'live lab' to test Chinese weapon systems, Turkiye supplied military hardware to Islamabad, says Deputy Chief of Army Staff Lt General Rahul R Singh

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI

China used the four-day India-Pakistan conflict in May like a "live lab" to test various weapon systems and was providing all possible support to Islamabad, in line with its ancient military strategy of killing the adversary with a "borrowed knife", Deputy Chief of Army Staff Lt Gen. Rahul R Singh said on Friday.

The senior military officer said while Pakistan was the "front face", with China extending all possible support to its all-weather ally, Turkiye was also playing a major role by supplying military hardware to Is-

lamabad, adding that India was actually dealing with at least three adversaries during the May 7-10 conflict.

In an address at a seminar on "New Age Military Technologies" organised by industry chamber FICCI,



Lieutenant General Singh suggested that China used its satellites to monitor Indian military deployment as the Pakistani military was getting live inputs on it during the DGMO (Director General of Military Operations)-level phone

talks.

The Deputy Chief of Army Staff highlighted China's ancient military strategy of "36 stratagems" and killing the adversary with a "borrowed knife" to buttress the point that Beijing extended all possible support to Pakistan to cause pain to India.

Lt Gen. Singh, who looks after the Indian Army's capability development and sustenance vertical, said Beijing's support to Islamabad was not surprising as 81 per cent of the military hardware used by the Pakistani armed forces are from China.

"Pakistan was the front face. We had China providing all possible support.



Army deputy chief highlighted China's ancient military strategy of killing the adversary with a "borrowed knife" to buttress the point that Beijing extended support to Pakistan

This is no surprise because if you look at statistics, in the last five years, 81 per cent of the military hardware that Pakistan is getting is all Chinese," he said.

"He (China) would rather use the neighbour (Pakistan) to cause pain (to India) than getting involved

in a mudslinging match on the northern border," Lt Gen. Singh said.

He said Turkiye also played an important role in providing support to Pakistan.

"We saw numerous drones coming and landing in the face of war, dur-

ing the war, along with the individuals who are there," Lt Gen. Singh said.

The military officer underlined the need for India to learn its lessons from the conflict.

"The next important lesson is the importance of C4ISR (Command, Control, Communications, Computers, Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance) and civil-military fusion. There is a lot to be done as far as this domain is concerned," he said.

"When the DGMO-level talks were on, Pakistan actually was mentioning that we know that your such and such vector is primed and ready for action, and we would request you to perhaps pull it back. So he was getting live inputs from China. That is one place we really need to move fast and take appropriate action," Lt Gen. Singh said.

The Deputy Chief of

P3

DALAI LAMA SUCCESSION PLAN

India says does not take position on faith, religion

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI/BEIJING

India on Friday said it does not take any position on matters concerning faith and religion, two days after the Dalai Lama, the Tibetan spiritual leader, unveiled a plan for choosing his successor that has been rejected by China.

Ahead of his 90th birthday on Sunday, the 14th Dalai Lama Tenzin Gyatso had on Wednesday affirmed that the institution of the Dalai Lama will continue and that only the Gaden Phodrang Trust will have the sole authority to recognise his future "reincarnation", declaring no one else can "interfere" in his succession plan. The Gaden Phodrang Trust was founded by the current Dalai Lama in 2015 to oversee matters related to the



600-year-old institution of the Dalai Lama.

External Affairs Ministry spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal said the Indian government has always upheld freedom of religion for all in the country and will continue to do so.

"We have seen reports relating to the statement made by His Holiness the Dalai Lama about the continuation of the Dalai Lama institution," he said.

"The government of India does not take any position or speak on matters concerning beliefs and prac-

P3

Shinde's 'Jai Gujarat' slogan kicks up row, Fadnavis defends his deputy

AGENCIES
MUMBAI

Maharashtra Deputy Chief Minister Eknath Shinde's 'Jai Gujarat' slogan at a Pune event kicked up a row, with the Congress seeking his resignation by dubbing it as "sycophancy and political slavery" while Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis defended his colleague.

NCP (SP) said Shinde has betrayed the Marathi 'ma-



noos' (person).

"Jai Hind, Jai Maharashtra, Jai Gujarat," Shinde said at the event, where Union min-

ister Amit Shah was present. Shah addressed the gathering in Gujarati language.

"Just because Shinde said Jai Gujarat, it doesn't mean that Shinde loves Gujarat more than Maharashtra," Fadnavis told reporters.

"Such a parochial thinking doesn't behove Marathi mannos," he added.

Fadnavis recalled that when a statue of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj was

P3

Global community must stand united against terror: PM

The PM Modi was addressing Trinidad & Tobago Parliament

AGENCIES
PORT OF SPAIN

Terming terrorism as the enemy of humanity, Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Friday said the global community must stand united to deny it any shelter or space.

In his address to the Joint Assembly of Parliament of Trinidad & Tobago, Prime Minister Modi also announced that the Caribbean



nation will be a priority nation for India.

"Terrorism is the enemy of humanity. This very Red

House has itself witnessed the wounds of terror and the loss of innocent blood.

P3

Fruits of growth reaching the 'most needy': PM Modi

AGENCIES
PORT OF SPAIN

India will soon be among the top three economies of the world, and its missions on artificial intelligence, semiconductor and quantum computing are becoming the new engines of growth, Prime Minister Narendra Modi has said.

In an address at a gathering of the Indian diaspora on Thursday, PM Modi said India is a land of opportuni-

ties today, and the fruits of its growth and progress are reaching the "most needy".

"For New India, even the sky is not the limit."

Modi attended the event hours after landing in Trinidad and Tobago in the second leg of his five-nation tour. It is the first bilateral visit by an Indian prime minister to this Caribbean island nation since 1999.

Trinidad and Tobago's Prime Minister Kamla

P3

Haryana minister says those who oppose Hindi are 'anti-Hindustan'

TDG NETWORK
CHANDIGARH

Haryana's Energy Transport and Labour Minister Anil Vij has criticised the opposition to the Hindi language in Maharashtra, calling such resistance "anti-Hindustan".

His remarks come amid a growing controversy over the imposition of Hindi in the state and a recent incident involving the assault



of a Hindi-speaking shopkeeper in Mira Road for not speaking Marathi.

Speaking to reporters in Ambala, Vij said, "Those who oppose Hindi are, in fact, opposing Hindustan." He targeted leaders of Shiv Sena and Maharashtra Navnirman Sena (MNS), accusing them of putting regional identity above national unity. He urged them to promote harmony instead of linguistic division.

The Haryana minister said

P3

Flags of Iran, Palestine raised in Muharram procession in Srinagar

ASHIQ MIR
SRINAGAR

Flags of Iran, Palestine and Hezbollah were raised by mourners during a 8th Muharram procession on Friday in Srinagar. The event, observed annually to commemorate the martyrdom of Imam Hussain witnessed thousands participating in religious gatherings and processions.

Several mourners car-



ried the flags as a mark of support to people in the Muslim world, particularly Palestinians facing

P3

ECI: 1.5 crore houses covered under Bihar voter list revision

ANAND SINGH
NEW DELHI

The Election Commission of India on Friday claimed that the first visit of the Booth Level Officers (BLOs) to nearly 1.5 crore households in Bihar has been completed on Friday. It further said that over 87 per cent of enumeration forms, out of the total of nearly 7.90 crore electors who are enrolled as on June 24, 2025, have been distributed during the Special Intensive Revision (SIR)



Over 87 % of enumeration forms, out of the total of 7.90 crore electors distributed

exercise being conducted in the state.

The Commission also stated that the remaining houses could be locked, or of dead electors, or of migrants or of those who may be travelling.

"Since, the BLO shall be visiting three times to the houses of the electors during the exercise, these figures are likely to increase further," it said.

It said partially filled forms are also available for download on the ECI portal as

P3

Chances of sudden death less among vaccinated people: Study

MANOHAR KESARI
NEW DELHI

A study undertaken by by doctors of five different departments of AIIMS in Delhi has confirmed that the Covid-19 vaccine is safe.

According to AIIMS study, no death has happened due to Covid vaccine. Those who have a history of the disease in their family have died. Among those who died suddenly, it was found that these

people used to smoke and consume alcohol. Smokers were found at number one.

The doctors said people who take the vaccine are safer than those who did not take the vaccine. Dr. Rajiv Narang, Professor of Cardiology Department at AIIMS, Delhi, said that chances of sudden death are less among those who have taken the vaccine.

Dr Narang said the deaths that are happening in the



youth due to sudden cardiac arrest are of two types. One is rhythmic problem and the other is hypertrophy cardio myopathy. Apart from this, classical heart attacks are

happening due to blood clot. Not only this, the reason for each death can be different. After the Corona period, social media has become more active due to which things are going viral rapidly and people have also become aware.

Dr. Sanjay Rai, a profiler of community medicine and principal investigator of the Covid vaccine, said: "On January 16, 2021, we started making the Covid vaccine

Covishield and we used the vaccine. So far 32 vaccines have been approved. Vaccines were made using various techniques. The fourth dose is also being given at many places. WHO has talked about giving vaccine to everyone. The side effect of this vaccine is very less."

Dr Karan Madan of the Pulmonary Department said in all the Covid vaccines used it was not found any

P3



Pilgrims travel along the mountain path as they begin their trek towards the cave shrine of Shri Amarnath Baba from Baltal Base camp, in Ganderbal on Thursday. ANI

NDA CAMPUS APPROPRIATE PLACE FOR BAJIRAO’S MEMORIAL: SHAH

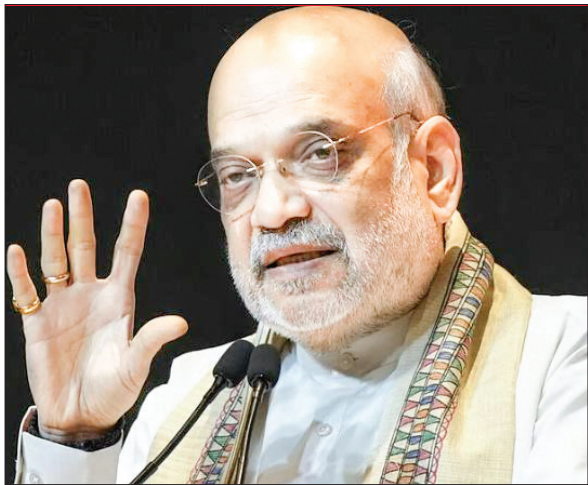
Praises Marathas’ 100-year fight for Swaraj led by Shivaji, Bajirao.

TDG NETWORK
PUNE

The National Defence Academy (NDA) campus in Pune the most appropriate location for Maratha empire warrior Peshwa Bajirao’s memorial, Union minister Amit Shah said on Friday. NDA is the most appropriate place for his memorial as it is the academy where military leadership is being trained, Shah said, while unveiling Peshwa Bajirao’s equestrian statue at the NDA campus.

“Had the battle for independence started by Shivaji Maharaj and taken forward by the Peshwas for 100 years not been fought, India’s basic structure would have ceased to exist,” Shah said.

“In his life of 40 years, Peshwa Bajirao wrote an immortal history which no



other person could write,” Shah said.

Some educational institutes located along the route taken by Shah to the venue of the event either announced a holiday, half day or online classes to ensure students are not affected by road closure and traffic diversions.

He also said India’s armed

forces and the leadership are committed to defend ‘Swaraj’ or sovereignty of the country, and it was demonstrated very well during Operation Sindoor. Speaking after the unveiling of an equestrian statue of Maratha statesman and general Peshwa Bajirao I at the National Defence Academy (NDA) here, the BJP

leader also said whenever he is plagued by negative thoughts, he thinks of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj and Bajirao. The NDA was the most appropriate place for Bajirao’s memorial as it is an institution where military leadership is trained, Shah said. “Whenever negative thoughts come to my mind, I usually think about ‘Bal’ (young) Shivaji and Peshwa Bajirao, thinking that they were able to establish a ‘Swaraj’ (self-rule or sovereign state) amid adverse conditions,” he said.

The responsibility to defend the Swaraj now lies with 140 crore Indians, Shah added.

“When it was time to put up a fight to establish a Swaraj, we did it. When fighting will be required to defend the Swaraj, our forces and leadership will definitely demonstrate it,

and Operation Sindoor was its finest example,” he said.

The Narendra Modi-led government has adopted a ‘well thought out holistic approach’ to improve the health of the citizens of the country, Union minister Amit Shah said in Pune on Friday. Special attention has been given to every programme touching health, especially medical education and research, Shah said after performing the ground breaking ceremony of Poo-na Hospital and Research Centre (PHRC) Health City project.

In the past 11 years, the Modi government has made all the arrangements to improve the health of the citizens of the country, he said.

“In the previous government, the health budget was Rs 37,000 crore and in 2025-26, Modi ji increased it to Rs 1.37 lakh crore,” he said.

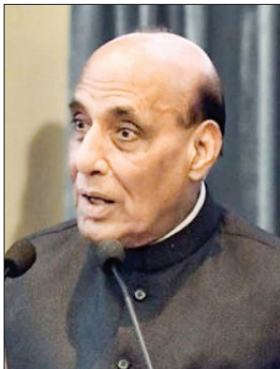
‘Terrorists followed their Dharma, Armed forces responded with Karma’

ARZU SETH
NEW DELHI

Standing before a gathering in Hyderabad to mark the 128th birth anniversary of Alluri Sitarama Raju, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh delivered a pointed and deeply symbolic message.

Referring to the recent Pahalgam terror attack, Singh said the Indian Armed Forces had responded not just with force, but with moral clarity. “Terrorists killed innocent civilians in Pahalgam based on their Dharma,” he said. “Our forces, through Operation Sindoor, destroyed terrorist hideouts based on their Karma.”

He added that the military action was carried out with restraint, carefully avoiding civilian harm, and that under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, the Armed Forces have both



the freedom and capacity to act decisively against terrorism.

In linking the ethos of the Armed Forces with that of Alluri Sitarama Raju, Singh mentioned the freedom fighter as more than just a historical figure.

“Alluri ji was not just a revolutionary, he was a movement,” the Defence Minister said. “His fight against injustice, despite limited means, reflects the same spirit of determination that guides our military today,” Singh drew parallels

between Alluri’s principled guerrilla resistance and the patience shown by Indian forces in Operation Sindoor — both, he said, grounded in purpose and restraint rather than vengeance.

Turning to the government’s wider efforts, Singh underscored India’s renewed push for tribal empowerment, calling it a natural extension of Alluri ji’s vision.

He cited initiatives like the PM Tribal Development Mission, Skill India, and the Sickle Cell Anemia Elimination Campaign, describing them not as charity, but as long-overdue steps toward dignity and inclusion. “From being pushed to the margins to becoming active partners in India’s growth story, our tribal communities reflect how far we’ve come,” Singh said, closing his speech with a call to honour Alluri’s legacy through unity and shared purpose.

No comments on matters of faith and religion: MEA

ADITYA WADHAWAN
NEW DELHI

The Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) has clarified that the Indian government does not speak on matters pertaining to faith and religion. The statement released by MEA further said that there exists freedom of religion in India and it would remain so in future too.

“We have seen reports relating to the statement made by ‘His Holiness the Dalai Lama’ about the continuation of the Dalai Lama institution.

Government of India does not take any position or speak on matters concerning beliefs and practices of faith and religion. Government has always upheld freedom of religion for all in India and will continue to



do so,” said Randhir Jaiswal, spokesperson, MEA.

Dalai Lama on July 3, 2025, made a statement that only the Gaden Phodrang Trust, the Office of His Holiness, holds the sole authority to recognise his future reincarnation. This statement by Dalai Lama challenges the Chinese claims to control the succession of the Tibetan spiritual leader.

“Now since the purpose of a reincarnation is to carry on the work of the

predecessor, the new Dalai Lama will be born in a free world so that the traditional mission of the Dalai Lama that is to be the voice for universal compassion, the spiritual leader of Tibetan Buddhism, and the symbol of Tibet embodying the aspirations of Tibetan people will continue,” said Dalai Lama in his recently released book, ‘Voice for the Voiceless: Over Seven Decades of Struggle with China for My Land and My People’.

Sub Lt Poonia becomes first woman fighter pilot in Navy

BRYAN THOMAS
NEW DELHI

At an airbase humming with anticipation, two young officers took a defining step in their careers — and in the history of Indian naval aviation. On July 3rd, during the winging ceremony of the Second Basic Hawk Conversion Course at INS Dega in Visakhapatnam, Sub Lieutenant Aastha Poonia

Alongside her, Lieutenant Atul Kumar Dhull was also awarded the coveted Wings of Gold. The honours were presented by Rear Admiral Janak Bevl, Assistant Chief of Naval Staff (Air), in a ceremony that blended tradition with quiet transformation.

Until now, women in the Navy’s aviation arm had been flying helicopters and multi-role



etched her name in the record books as the first woman to be inducted into the fighter stream of the Indian Navy.

aircraft — critical platforms, no doubt, but outside the high-speed, high-risk world of fighter jets.

Haryana Cong tug-of-war: Lobbying intensifies ahead of key appointments

NEERAJ MOHAN
CHANDIGARH

Amid tall claims of transparency in organizational appointments, the Haryana Congress is reportedly witnessing a fierce round of internal lobbying and factional pressure as the party prepares to announce new district presidents and a new Haryana Pradesh Congress Committee (HPCC) chief after over a decade.

Despite assurances by senior Congress leader Rahul Gandhi that the appointments would follow due recommendations from the Central Observers, a number of state leaders have been camping in Delhi to lobby for their loyalists. The All India Congress Committee (AICC) observers had submitted panels from each district — each including six names balancing caste, gender, and regional repre-

sentation — but the final list remains under wraps.

Party sources revealed that some senior Haryana Congress leaders have expressed displeasure over the selection process, alleging that they weren’t given a fair hearing during panel deliberations. They are now seeking meetings with central leadership to register their objections, further delaying the much-anticipated announcement.

The urgency to restructure the organization stems from the Congress’s disappointing performance in the 2024 Lok Sabha elections, where it secured only 37 seats against the BJP’s 48. Party insiders and analysts attributed the loss to deep-rooted factionalism, poor grassroots engagement, and neglect of local leadership — factors now pushing the party high command to overhaul the state unit.

While the panels of six candidates for each district president have reportedly been finalized with due SC, OBC, and women’s representation, leaders from marginalized communities are demanding more. Haryana SC Department chief Manoj Bagri, in a media briefing, called for greater inclusion of Scheduled Caste workers in the party structure. Bagri also met National SC Department chief Rajendra Pal Gautam and other senior leaders to press for equitable representation. “Our SC workers must get their due place in the organization,” Bagri said. Also lobbying is intensifying over the selection of the next Haryana Pradesh Congress Committee President. Several OBC leaders are in contention, with the party keen on strengthening its base among the politically significant Other Backward Classes.

Palwal CMO caught taking bribe; demanded Rs 15 lakh, ACB seizes Rs 4 lakh from home

NEERAJ MOHAN
CHANDIGARH

In a major crackdown on corruption in the health department, the Gurugram unit of the Haryana State Vigilance and Anti-Corruption Bureau (ACB) has arrested Dr Jai Bhagwan, Chief Medical Officer (CMO) of Palwal district, for allegedly demanding a bribe of Rs 15 lakh from the owners of a private hospital.

The arrest was made during a late-night trap on Thursday, after a complaint was filed by one of the partners of Sunrise Trauma Hospital, which has



been operating in Palwal for the last three months. The ACB team caught the CMO red-handed while accepting an installment of Rs 1 lakh at his government residence.

ACB sleuths, accompanied by a duty magistrate and independent witnesses, con-

ducted search operations at the CMO’s official residence in Palwal, recovering an additional Rs 3 lakh in cash from a cupboard, suspected to be part of previously paid bribe installments.

A case has been registered under Section 7 of the Prevention of Corruption Act and Section 308(2) of the Indian Penal Code, 2023, at the State Vigilance and Anti-Corruption Bureau Police Station in Faridabad.

According to the complaint filed with the ACB Gurugram unit, Dr Jai Bhagwan had al-

legedly been pressuring the hospital management — comprising partners Manohar, Dheeraj, Subhash, and the complainant — for a Rs 15 lakh bribe, threatening to shut down the trauma centre by repeatedly highlighting “deficiencies” in its operations during inspections.

The complainant further alleged that Rs 7 lakh had already been paid to the CMO, with Rs 8 lakh more demanded in one go citing that a portion of the bribe was meant to be passed on to senior officials.

Faridkot DSP held for taking bribe, tries to bribe SP to 'suppress' plaint

TDG NETWORK
CHANDIGARH

A Deputy Superintendent of Police (DSP) posted in Faridkot district has been arrested for corruption after he allegedly took a bribe of Rs 1 lakh from a complainant and later tried to bribe a subordinate of Senior Superintendent of Police to suppress a complaint filed against him.

The officer, identified as Rajan Pal, was serving as DSP (Crime against Women) in Faridkot. He has been

booked under the Prevention of Corruption Act and taken into custody. Officials confirmed that departmental action has also been initiated.

According to Senior Superintendent of Police (SSP) Dr Pragya Jain, the case began when a woman named Kiranjit Kaur, a resident of Pakka village, filed a complaint saying the DSP had demanded Rs 1 lakh from her brother Karmtej Singh to take action in a matrimonial dispute case. Despite

paying the bribe, no action was taken by the officer.

“When the family approached me, they said the DSP had taken money but did nothing in the case,” said SSP Jain. “On Thursday, the DSP came to my office and tried to bribe my staff member, ASI Jasvinder Singh, with another Rs 1 lakh to get the complaint withdrawn. I was alerted immediately, and we registered an FIR and arrested him around 1 am.”

ASI Jasvinder Singh, who

works as the reader in the SSP’s office, is now the complainant in the corruption case. The FIR was filed at Faridkot City Police Station under the relevant sections of the Prevention of Corruption Act.

“The Punjab government’s message is clear: there will be zero tolerance for corruption,” said SSP Jain.

Police said further investigation is underway to determine if more people were involved in the bribery attempt.

Ch'garh FM calls for strict action on GST fraud

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

A crucial meeting of the Group of Ministers (GoM), constituted to make GST revenue collection more transparent, tech-enabled, and efficient across the country, was held on Friday in New Delhi. Chhattisgarh’s Finance Minister O.P. Choudhary participated as a member and shared the state’s experience, offering significant suggestions such as strict action against bogus traders, the use of modern technology in the registration process, and the curbing of fake input tax credit

claims. The GoM is headed by Goa Chief Minister Dr. Pramod P. Sawant.

During the meeting, Choudhary shared Chhattisgarh’s policy interventions and practical insights. The primary objective of the GoM meeting was to assess the challenges in revenue collection and explore comprehensive solutions.

Finance ministers from various states discussed the economic and other factors affecting GST revenues in their respective regions. On this occasion, Choudhary highlighted several initiatives undertaken by Chhattisgarh in the fields of anti-



evasion and tax compliance.

He informed the group that Chhattisgarh is extensively using data analytics and AI-based tools to prevent tax evasion and facilitate genuine taxpayers. These efforts have significantly contrib-

uted to the state’s revenue growth. The meeting also included presentations on advanced platforms such as BIFA, GST Prime, and the E-Way Bill portal. Choudhary recommended the nationwide implementation of such innovations, stating that it would accelerate the identification and action against bogus businesses.

The Finance Minister also emphasized the need for a centralized digital mechanism to ensure transparency in the registration process, curb fake billing, and stop fraudulent input tax credit claims. He noted that such measures would not only en-

hance revenue but also build trust among taxpayers.

Choudhary further highlighted that under the leadership of Chief Minister Shri Vishnu Deo Sai, Chhattisgarh has been conducting regular reviews at the state level and adopting data-driven decision-making processes, which have yielded promising results. He added that the Chhattisgarh model could serve as a useful framework for other states.

He concluded by saying that all states must work together through collaborative efforts to ensure stability and growth in GST revenue collection.

Kangana faces backlash over absence from disaster-hit Mandi

VIPIN PARMAR
NEW DELHI

Bollywood actress and MP from Mandi-Kullu in Himachal Pradesh, Kangana Ranaut, has been trolled on social media. In fact, Kangana posted a message on her X Media account on July 2 expressing her condolences over the disaster in Mandi after a cloudburst. Kangana is facing backlash.

More than 90% of social media users who commented on the MP’s post are angry with Kangana. Most have reacted sharply, advis-



ing Kangana to meet the disaster-hit people, know their condition, and stay among the public.

One social media user wrote, “Aao Jhansi ki Rani Aao! Now Himachal as well as the leaders here are

looking for you. No officer will refuse you; you won’t even have to walk in the mud. Just give darshan, even if you have tea at your Manali cafe.”

Another user wrote: “As an MP, you have to be among the people. What will happen by tweeting?”

A user named Abhishek wrote, “Madam ji, you remember very quickly. Think trailers were more important than people’s lives. Well, there is nothing to expect from you; what does the rich care about the life of a poor person?”

THE DAILY GUARDIAN SURVEY ON DELHI-NCR EOL VEHICLES POLICY

76% believe there should be a uniform rule for banning vehicles

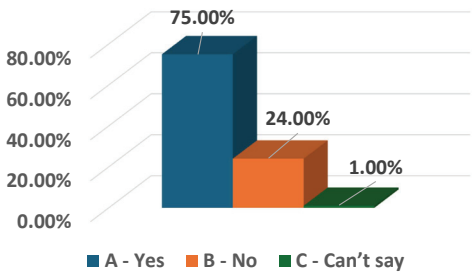
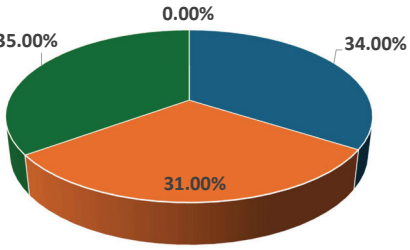
Delhi's air quality is under scrutiny as CAQM enforces a July 1 directive to ban and impound petrol vehicles over 15 years old and diesel ones over 10. Experts from CSE, IIT-Delhi, and DTU argue that

vehicle age shouldn't be the sole criterion. They advocate strengthening emission standards and the Pollution Under Control (PUC) system instead.

Q1.▶

What is your opinion on the ban of diesel vehicles after 10 years and petrol vehicles after 15 years?

- The decision is right
- The decision is wrong
- The decision should be reconsidered
- Can't say



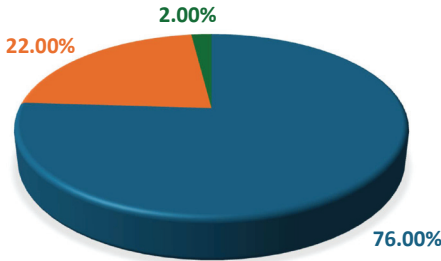
Q2.▶

Should the decision be based not on the age of the vehicle but on their fitness (condition)?

Q3.▶

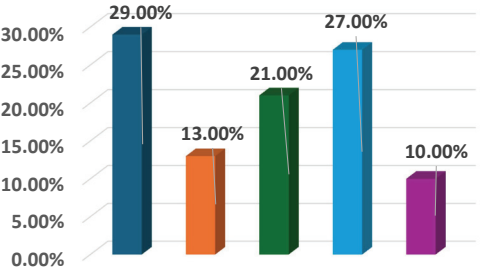
Do you think there should be a uniform rule across the country on banning vehicles?

- Yes, there should be a common rule across the country:
- No, the current rules are correct:
- Can't say:



Q4.▶

If your old vehicle is banned in Delhi-NCR, what will you do?



- Will sell it outside
- Will challenge the decision in court
- Will buy electric vehicles
- Will take it to another state and get it registered
- Can't say

Fruits of growth reaching the 'most needy': PM

CONTINUED FROM P1

Persad-Bissessar, members of her cabinet, lawmakers and several other dignitaries were among over 4,000 people who attended the event.

In his remarks, Modi lavished praise on the Indian community in Trinidad and Tobago, and said: "They left their soil, but not their soul."

"They left the Ganga and Yamuna behind but carried the Ramayan in their hearts. They left their soil, but not their soul. They were not just migrants. They were messengers of a timeless civilisation," he said.

"Their contributions have benefitted this country -- culturally, economically and spiritually. Just look at the impact that you have all had on this beautiful nation," he added.

PM Modi said he brought a replica of the Ram temple

and some water from the river Sarayu in Ayodhya.

"You all know that earlier this year, the world's largest spiritual gathering, the Maha Kumbh, took place. I have the honour to carry water from the Maha Kumbh also with me," he said.

"I request Kamla ji (prime minister) to offer the holy waters of the Sarayu River and Maha Kumbh to the Ganga Dhara here. May these holy waters bless the people of Trinidad and Tobago," he added.

PM Modi said India is actively working on creating a comprehensive database of the Girmitya community. The community comprised indentured labourers sent from British India to work on plantations in South Africa, Fiji, Mauritius and the Caribbean islands.

In his address, the Prime Minister also highlighted

the resilience of the Indian economy and its upward trajectory.

"India is the fastest-growing major economy in the world. Soon, we will be among the top three economies of the world. The fruits of India's growth and progress are reaching the most needy," he said.

The Prime Minister said India has shown that poverty can be defeated by empowering the poor and that crores of people, for the first time, have developed the confidence that the country can be freed from poverty.

He said India's growth is being powered by its "innovative and energetic" youth.

"Today, India is the third-largest startup hub in the world. Nearly half of these startups also have women as directors. Nearly 120 startups have got unicorn status," he said.

"National missions for

AI, Semiconductor and Quantum computing are becoming the new engines of growth. In a way, innovation is becoming a mass movement," he noted.

Modi also showcased India's Unified Payments Interface (UPI), saying it has revolutionised digital payments.

"Nearly 50 per cent of the world's real-time digital transactions take place in India. I congratulate Trinidad and Tobago for being the first country in the region to adopt UPI."

"Now sending money will be as easy as sending a 'good morning' text message! And I promise, it will be faster than West Indies bowling," he said.

The Prime Minister also outlined India's rapid development and transformation in the fields of infrastructure, defence and manufacturing.

ECI: 1.5 cr houses covered under voter list revision

CONTINUED FROM P1

well on ECINET App and the filled forms can be uploaded by the elector himself on ECINET App.

Besides, 1,54,977 Booth Level Agents (BLAs) appointed by various political parties are also providing active support in the SIR process.

It stated that as on July 2, BJP has appointed 52,689 BLAs, followed by 47,504 of RJD, 34,669 of JD(U), 16,500 of INC, 1,913 of Rashtriya Lok Jan Shakti Party, 1,271 of CPI(ML)L, 1,153 of Lok Jan Shakti Party (Ram Vilas), 578 of CPI(M), 270 of Rashtriya Lok Samta Party

besides others such as BSP

(74), NPP (3) and AAP (1). Each BLA can submit up to 50 certified forms per day.

"Nearly five percent filled-up and signed forms i.e. nearly 38 lakh forms have already been received by the BLOs who are working sincerely with the sole motto - Inclusion First, which has been repeatedly emphasized upon by the Commission," it said.

It also said that as per SIR, in order to get one's name in the Draft Electoral Roll to be published on August 1, 2025, the strict condition for an elector is to sign and submit the pre-printed Enumeration Form before July

25, 2025.

"Simultaneous verification of the uploaded forms has also been started," it said, adding that "despite apprehensions by some quarters, SIR will ensure that all eligible persons will be included".

It also pointed out that based on the documents attached or not attached, with the signed Enumeration Form, "eligibility verification of each name included in the draft rolls will be done continuously after their receipt".

"Verification will start vigorously from August 2, 2025 onwards after publication of Draft Electoral Rolls. On the

basis of the published Draft of Electoral Rolls, Claims and Objections will be received from any political parties or any member of public August 2, 2025 onwards," it said.

It also said that the final electoral rolls will be published on September 30, 2025 and appeals can also be filed thereafter with the DM and the CEO.

The poll panel has issued instructions to carry out a SIR in Bihar to weed out ineligible names and ensure all eligible citizens are included in the electoral roll, allowing them to exercise their franchise in the polls slated later this year.

Row over 'Jai Gujarat' slogan

CONTINUED FROM P1

unveiled at Chikodi in Karnataka, former Union minister Sharad Pawar had said 'Jai Maharashtra, Jai Karnataka'.

"Does this mean that Sharad Pawar loves Karnataka more and Maharashtra less?" Fadnavis asked.

Meanwhile, Maharashtra Congress chief Harshwardhan Sapkal sought Shinde's resignation for exhibiting

"political slavery" and betraying the state's pride.

"Maharashtra is the land of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj, who stood for self-respect and sovereignty. It is a matter of shame that a leader occupying the Deputy Chief Minister's chair would chant 'Jai Gujarat' instead of 'Jai Maharashtra'. This is nothing but political slavery," Sapkal said in a statement.

After breaking the original

Shiv Sena and being rewarded with the party's name and symbol by the powers in Gujarat, Shinde has crossed all limits to please his political masters, he further claimed.

"His slogan of 'Jai Gujarat' is not just sycophancy, it is an insult to every proud Maharashtrian. Shinde's actions show how deeply entrenched Gujarat's influence has become in Maharashtra politics under the current regime," Sapkal added.

India was fighting three enemies, says Army on China role

CONTINUED FROM P1

Army Staff asserted that the "strategic messaging" by the Indian leadership was unambiguous and that there was no scope for "absorbing" the pain the way it was done years ago.

The planning and selection of targets in Pakistan and Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (PoK) was based on a lot of data that was collected using technology and human intelligence, he said.

A total of 21 targets were identified, of which nine

"we thought would be prudent to engage", Lt Gen. Singh said.

India launched Operation Sindoor on May 7, targeting terrorist infrastructure in territories controlled by Pakistan, in response to the April 22 Pahalgam terror attack, in which 26 people were killed.

The strikes triggered four days of intense clashes that ended with an understanding on stopping the military actions on May 10.

New Delhi has been maintaining that India's fierce counter-attack that day

forced Pakistan to plead for ending the hostilities.

In his remarks, Lt Gen. Singh emphasised the high demand for drones in the armed forces and underlined the need to develop a favourable ecosystem.

"We have been in consultation with the Ministry of Defence and others to come up with a framework and by September or October, we should be out with our drone framework, wherein we are looking at how to incentivise all the production, how to get through the vulnerabilities and how

to facilitate testing, which would be the basic theme of this framework," he said.

On the success of and learnings from Operation Sindoor, Lt Gen. Singh urged the industry to focus on investing more on research and development.

He stressed the need for "atmanirbharta" (self-reliance) in the defence sector and said no one should hold hostage as far as critical technologies and their supplies are concerned.

"India needs to be prepared for all five generations of warfare. The In-

dian armed forces must be ready now and future-ready for warfare that utilises numerous technologies and innovations," the Deputy Chief of Army Staff asserted.

The industry must stick to timelines and focus on four "C's, which include cooperate, collaborate and compete, but not complain, he said.

"We have to be ready to fight the war, and it is not the soldiers only who can win a war. It is the soldiers and the industry going together," he added.

Vaccines vis-a-vis sudden deaths

CONTINUED FROM P1

where that sudden death has happened due to the vaccine. The benefits of the Covid-19 vaccine are enormous.

Dr Sudhir Arava, Professor, Department of Pathology, AIIMS, said most people died due to lung damage. Most of the deaths of young people who died suddenly have been due to heart disease.

"We also checked the hearts of all the young people who died suddenly. In

the one-year analysis report, we have included about 300 people who died suddenly and had taken the vaccine. In this survey, it was found that there was a problem in the cardio vascular system. Some had heart infection. Most of the deaths were due to coronary artery disease. We did an examination of all the body parts. There were many cases in which everything was fine but still death occurred. Not only this, the autopsy came negative in the corona case. 50% had mo-

lecular mutation," he said. Dr Tulika Seth, Head of Hematology Department, said it is the nature of the vaccine that can cause blood clots. Thrombosis i.e. blood clots also occur among people. During the time of Corona, due to the high infection of its virus, blood clotting was also very high, in which normal medicine did not work to thin the blood. In such a situation, people should still keep getting tests related to it due to genetic problems.

Anil Vij on Hindi use

CONTINUED FROM P1

that Hindi language is a key in the country's federal system as it unites the entire country. Those who oppose Hindi are, in fact, opposing the nation. Vij said that there is no objection to promoting one's own language, but the disrespect of Hindi will not be tolerated.

The row intensified after the Maharashtra government recently withdrew its proposed three-language policy, which aimed to introduce Hindi as a third language in Marathi and English medium schools from Classes 1 to 5. The decision to withdraw the resolution, made on June 29, followed strong protests by opposi-

tion parties including Shiv Sena (UBT) and MNS, led by Uddhav Thackeray and Raj Thackeray respectively.

The Language Advisory Committee in Maharashtra had earlier opposed the inclusion of any third language, including Hindi, in primary education. The committee's resolution further escalated the debate, with critics arguing that the move marginalized Hindi-speaking residents in the state. Vij, known for his outspoken views, also accused the Congress and Samajwadi Party of politicizing the issue for electoral gains. He criticized their stance on the language dispute, saying such actions fuel unnecessary discord in the country.

Stand united against terror: PM

CONTINUED FROM P1

We must stand united to deny terrorism any shelter or space," he said.

The Prime Minister thanked the people and the government of the Caribbean nation for standing with India in its fight against terrorism.

Modi said there are new challenges and the old institutions are struggling to deliver peace and progress.

"At the same time, the Global South is rising. They wish to see a new and fairer world order," PM Modi said, pushing for long-pending reforms of the United Nations.

Flags of Iran raised in Muharram procession

CONTINUED FROM P1

the ongoing conflict. While the procession remained largely peaceful, it drew attention from both the local administration and security agencies, given the geopolitical significance of the banners displayed.

The display of such flags is not new in Kashmir during Muharram as participants often express broader Muslim unity and opposition to injustice.

For over three decades, the 8th Muharram procession was only permitted in selected areas under tight restrictions, and it is ongoing. The lifting of the ban in 2023 marked a major shift in policy and was hailed as a step towards religious inclusivity and reconciliation.

Moreover, the 8th of Muharram is part of the broader commemoration leading up to Ashura, the 10th of Muharram, which marks the martyrdom of Hazrat Imam Hussain (AS), the grandson of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), along with 72 of his companions in the Battle of Karbala in

present-day Iraq

Muharram procession was barred due to security concerns in the late 1980s. The traditional mourning route was, however, restored in 2023, a move welcomed across religious and civil society circles.

The administration had made elaborate security and logistical arrangements. The Divisional Commissioner Kashmir Vijay Kumar Bidhuri and senior police officials had earlier chaired high-level meetings with representatives of Shia organisations ahead of Muharram to coordinate efforts.

Also, traffic police Srinagar city issued an advisory in advance, announcing that vehicular movement along the route from Guru Bazar to Dalgate would be restricted from early morning. Additionally, traffic was diverted via Residency Road, Hari Singh High Street, Jehangir Chowk, and other inner routes, with designated parking provided at Gindun Park and SP College.

"It is reassuring that for

India on Dalai Lama succession

CONTINUED FROM P1

tices of faith and religion," Jaiswal added.

Jaiswal was responding to media queries on the statement by the Dalai Lama that also ended speculation on whether the Tibetan spiritual leader will have a successor or not after his death. The Dalai Lama has been living in exile in India since 1959.

Earlier in the day, China urged India to act cautiously on Tibet-related issues to avoid its impact on the improvement of bilateral relations. Beijing was responding to Union Minister Kiren Rijiju's assertion on Thursday that the decision on the Dalai Lama's incarnation would be taken by the established institution and the leader of the Tibetan Buddhists himself and no one else.

Rijiju reiterated on Friday that all the devotees and followers of the Dalai Lama want the Tibetan spiritual leader to decide on his successor.

Rijiju, however, clarified he was not making the remarks on behalf of the Indian government and neither was he commenting on a

statement made by China on Wednesday.

Rejecting the Nobel Peace laureate's succession plan, China insisted that any future heir must receive its seal of approval, adding a new chapter to Tibetan Buddhism's decades-long struggle with the Chinese ruling Communist Party.

Asked by reporters in Delhi about China's statement on the issue, Rijiju said, "I do not want to react to China's statement. I speak as a devotee, I have faith in the Dalai Lama, those who follow the Dalai Lama wish that he decides his successor."

"There is no need for any confusion on the Dalai Lama issue. All the people across the world who believe in Buddhism and follow the Dalai Lama want him to decide (on his succession). There is no need for me or the government to say anything. Who would be the next Dalai Lama, it will be decided by him," Rijiju said.

On Thursday, Rijiju had said the Dalai Lama is the "most important and defining institution" for Buddhists.

"All those who follow the Dalai Lama feel that the incarnation is to be decided by the established convention and as per the wish of the Dalai Lama himself. No one else has the right to decide it except him and the conventions in place," he had said.

Reacting to a question on Rijiju's remarks made on Thursday, Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Mao Ning said India should be clear of the anti-China separatist nature of the 14th Dalai Lama and honour its commitments on Xizang (Tibet) related issues. China refers to Tibet as Xizang.

"India should exercise caution in its words and actions, stop interfering in China's internal affairs with Xizang related issues and avoid impact on the improvement and development of the China-India relationship," Mao told a media briefing in Beijing.

Rijiju, a practising Buddhist, and Rajiv Ranjan Singh, a fellow Union minister, are representing the Government of India at the Dalai Lama's 90th birthday celebrations in Dharamshala on July 6.

POLITICIANS HITTING A NEW LOW, SAYS HC AS IT GRANTS RELIEF TO BJP MLC

Issues stern directive to Ravikumar to cooperate with the investigation.

BELLIE THOMAS
BENGALURU

The Karnataka High Court, on Friday granted temporary relief to the Chief Whip and BJP MLC N. Ravikumar in the case related to his alleged derogatory, vulgar, and sexist remarks against Chief Secretary Shalini Rajneesh, but the court expressed concern over the deteriorating standards of language used by politicians.

Hearing a petition challenging the FIR and to quash it, the High Court bench headed by Justice SR Krishna Kumar issued an interim order directing that no coercive action be taken against Ravikumar until July 8.

The court also issued a stern directive to Ravikumar to cooperate with the investigation.

Expressing displeasure, the bench observed that the lan-



guage used by politicians has stooped to a new low. “Politicians are going to a new low,” the bench remarked.

Ravikumar’s counsel submitted that his client, while protesting in front of Vidhana Soudha, had issued a statement criticizing the insensitivity of the Chief Minister and the state government, which was now being given a

The Karnataka LAS Officers’ Association has condemned Ravikumar’s alleged remarks and demanded an unconditional apology.

political twist.

The bench questioned the prosecution on whether the complaint was based solely on a media clip. Responding to this, Special Public Prosecutor BA Bellappa played the video clip containing Ravikumar’s alleged derogatory statement at the court’s request and urged the bench not to grant him any relief.

He also brought to the court’s notice that even IAS officers in the state had strongly protested against the remarks.

The prosecutor further argued that granting bail to Ravikumar could demoralize the police force. He also highlighted Ravikumar’s alleged objectionable remarks about Kalaburagi Deputy Commissioner Fouzia Tarannum.

Earlier, reacting to the controversy, N. Ravikumar had clarified that he had not made any derogatory remarks against Chief Secretary Shalini Rajneesh.

In a press statement, Ravikumar said, “I am shocked by the circulation of selective video clips and claims in print and social media alleging that I have spoken in a derogatory manner against the Chief Secretary.”

The Karnataka police had filed an FIR against Ravi-

kumar on Thursday for allegedly making derogatory remarks about Chief Secretary Shalini Rajneesh.

The Karnataka IAS Officers’ Association has condemned Ravikumar’s alleged remarks and demanded an unconditional apology. Ravikumar allegedly made the controversial statement on July 1 in the presence of the Leader of the Opposition in the Legislative Council, Chalavadi Narayanaswamy, and several police officials.

According to the Congress, Ravikumar, while expressing displeasure over the Chief Secretary’s absence during the submission of a BJP delegation’s memorandum, allegedly mocked her by saying she works for CM Siddaramaiah during the day and works for the government at night.

DKS urges Cong workers to work together amid 'CM row'

TDG NETWORK
MYSURU

Karnataka Deputy Chief Minister D K Shivakumar on Friday called on everyone in the party to work together, abiding by the advice and message given by Congress President Mallikarjun Kharge, as he refused to comment on whether he was still in the race to become the CM of the state.

After offering prayers to Goddess Chamundeshwari at the top of Chamundi Hills here, he said, “Efforts may fail, but not prayers”, and that he had made his wish before the Almighty.

There has been speculation within political circles, especially among the ruling Congress, for some time now about a possible change in the chief minister later this year, citing a power-sharing agreement between Siddaramaiah and Shivakumar.

“I don’t want any discussions now. I have not come here to speak about politics.



I want good for the state. Mallikarjun Kharge is the Congress President; he has given us a message and advice. Abiding by his words, let’s all work together,” Shivakumar said, responding to a question on whether he was out of the CM race after Siddaramaiah’s statement that he would serve a full five-year term.

Speaking to reporters here, Shivakumar said he, along with his family, had offered prayers to Goddess Chamundeshwari for the welfare of the state, himself, his family, and everyone.

Asked whether the time had come for the Goddess to bless him for his prayers, he said, “Efforts may fail,

but not prayers—I believe in this. I have prayed to the Goddess and wished for whatever I want.”

However, with Siddaramaiah asserting that he will be the CM for the full five-year term, Shivakumar on Wednesday said he had no objection and that he would stand by and support Siddaramaiah. Indicating that he had “no option”, Shivakumar, who is also the State Congress President, said he would abide by the directions of the high command.

There was stiff competition between Siddaramaiah and Shivakumar for the CM’s post after the Assembly election results in May 2023.

'The 2.5-year' formula likely to increase difficulties for Congress in Karnataka

AJIT MAINDOLA
NEW DELHI

The party has tried to show that everything is fine in Karnataka on the surface, but the matter has not cooled down yet. The 2.5-year formula is likely to increase difficulties for the Congress. Chief Minister Siddaramaiah and his faction have received some immediate relief, but as the 2.5-year time limit approaches, tensions are bound to rise within the Karnataka Congress.

It seems unlikely that State President and Deputy Chief Minister D. Shivakumar and his supporters will settle for anything less than the Chief Minister’s post. The 2.5-year deadline will be completed in November. Shivakumar’s supporters remain hopeful that the Leader of the Opposition in the Lok Sabha, Rahul Gandhi, will

fulfill the promise made to them. For some time now in Karnataka, both factions have been making public statements about the Chief Minister’s post. Not only were supporting leaders involved in this rhetoric, but even Chief Minister Siddaramaiah and party president Mallikarjun Kharge joined the fray. Siddaramaiah claimed he would remain CM for five years, while Kharge said the high command would decide what to do. The first controversy arose from Kharge’s statement about the high command, as many questioned why he referred to it separately—since he himself is the party president and part of the high command. As tensions escalated, state in-charge Ran-deep Surjewala visited Bengaluru and managed to temporarily defuse the situation. For now, the Siddaramaiah faction has received some

relief. However, the issue is far from resolved. Siddaramaiah wanted to expand and reshuffle his cabinet, but D. Shivakumar is not ready for this. His supporters insist that the cabinet should only be expanded after a decision on the Chief Minister’s post is taken in November.

Kharge, despite being from Karnataka himself, does not appear to be in a position to take a decisive call. Ultimately, the matter seems to be landing on Rahul Gandhi’s desk. The biggest challenge before Rahul now is deciding which leader to disappoint. Siddaramaiah and D. Shivakumar are both powerful figures, and upsetting either could prove costly for the party.

According to political experts, the situation in Karnataka is concerning. As in Madhya Pradesh, the 2.5-year power-sharing formula could backfire on the Congress in Karnataka as well.

BJD seeks HC-monitored probe into Puri Rath Yatra mismanagement

ANAND SINGH
NEW DELHI

Days after the stampede at the Jagannath Rath Yatra in Odisha’s Puri, the Biju Janata Dal (BJD) on Friday wrote to Governor Hari Babu Kham-bampati alleging severe mismanagement and saying it has deeply hurt religious sentiments of people and demanded to initiate a judicial enquiry, monitored by a sitting Judge of the Odisha High Court to ensure full accountability and justice for the victims.

Several top BJD leaders signed the letter that was sent to the Governor.

In their letter, the BJD leaders wrote, “With deep



anguish and utmost respect for the sanctity of the Rath Yatra of Lord Jagannath, we submit this memorandum to draw your kind attention to the severe mismanagement and serious lapses during this year’s Rath Yatra, which led to a tragedy of historic proportions.”

It said that the BJD high-

lighted a series of grave incidents that occurred during this year’s Rath Yatra, which have deeply hurt the sentiments of Lord Jagannath’s devotees across the globe and raised serious concerns about the management of the world-famous Rath Yatra.

Targeting the state government over the mismanage-

ment at the Rath Yatra, they said: “Due to the callous and casual attitude of the BJP-led state government, more than 750 devotees were injured, and tragically, three people lost their lives the following day due to the stampede near Gundicha Temple.”

They also pointed out that in unprecedented and highly condemnable act, “several eminent senior journalists were physically assaulted” by police personnel and restrained from covering the events, which amounts to a direct attack on democratic values and press freedom.

“Besides the Sevayats, who were performing their rites, were pulled down from the Charitos,” they alleged.

Venugopal calls 'SIR' a ‘sinister campaign’ to deny voter rights

ANAND SINGH
NEW DELHI

Congress on Friday doubled down on the Election Commission of India over the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of voter rolls in Bihar saying this government specializes in giving people hell and this exercise is a sinister campaign to deprive lakhs of voters of their franchise.

Taking a swipe at the government, Congress General Secretary (Organisation) K C Venugopal said, “This government specialises in giving people hell.”

Lamenting at the poll panel, the Congress leader said, “The SIR is a sinister exercise to deprive lakhs of voters of their franchise.”

Hitting out at the Election Commission, Venugopal asserted: “The unnecessary haste, and their absolute refusal to address genuine concerns raised by the Opposition, points to this being a clear effort to destroy the electoral system in Bihar.”



Vowing that the Congress will not allow it and said, “We will not let this go through. They must halt this ridiculous exercise immediately.”

He also attached a nww-seoport to back his claims.

His remarks came after an 11 party delegation met the Commission on Wednesday over the SIR of the voter rolls in Bihar and alleged that this exercise will disenfranchise over 2 crore voters in the state, where assembly polls for 243 member House is scheduled later this year.

Even the poll panel on Thursday clarified that it will notwithstanding the Oppo-

sition’s refrain that the ongoing SIR of Bihar’s electoral roll stands to disenfranchise “tens of lakhs” of electors, and said that it remains steadfast in proceeding with SIR strictly as per the Constitution and the laws governing voter enrolment.

The Commission informed the political parties that the SIR exercise is being conducted in a planned, structured and a phased manner to facilitate the inclusion of all eligible citizens.

It stated that active participation by 1,54,977 Booth Level Agents (BLAs) appointed by the recognised political parties across the state of Bihar is also ensuring that the process is happening in a transparent manner. CEC Gyanesh Kumar exhorted all political parties to come forward and appoint even more BLAs to assist the voters in enrolment and make the process fully transparent and participative.

Suspect held for 'rape' of Pune techie was her friend: Police

TDG NETWORK
PUNE

A suspect detained in connection with the alleged rape of a Pune IT professional at her home was her friend and not a stranger who gained entry by posing as a courier delivery agent, police said on Friday, casting doubt on her version of the events.

It was the woman herself who took a selfie with him and typed a threatening message in her phone, police commissioner Amitesh Kumar said.

“They know each other for a couple of years and belong to the same community,” he said.

The 22-year-old woman had claimed that a man who posed as a courier delivery agent entered her flat in Kondhwa area on Wednesday evening when she was alone, and forced himself on her. She passed out, and when she regained consciousness, he was gone, she said.



they argue, creates a conflict of interest and renders accountability impossible.

“The very groups responsible for violence are part of the

Before leaving, the accused clicked a selfie using her phone in which her back and a part of his face are seen, and left a message warning that he had taken her pictures and would release them on social media if she reported the incident, she told police.

But after detaining the suspect, who is a highly qualified professional, the police found that the woman herself had taken the selfie, which originally showed his face clearly, edited it, and also typed the purported threatening message.

No chemical spray had been used to make her unconscious (as suspected earlier), Kumar said.

“We are still ascertaining why the victim made allegations of rape and it is still under investigation as the girl’s mental state is not good at present,” the commissioner said.

Manipur: Arms, ammunition recovered in bid to restore peace

NIBIR DEKA
MANIPUR

From the midnight of 3rd July 2025 to the morning of 4th July 2025, Security Forces (SFs) conducted extensive search operations in the hill districts of Manipur. Acting on specific intelligence regarding the presence of a large cache of arms, ammunition, and other warlike materials concealed in various locations, coordinated operations were launched simultaneously at multiple sites in the interior and suspected areas of Tengnoupal, Kangpokpi, Chandel, and Churachandpur districts by joint teams comprising of Manipur Police, Assam Rifles/ Army and CAPFs. These operations resulted in the recovery of the following arms, ammunition, explosives, and other warlike stores.

A total of 203 weapons have been listed, including 21 Insas rifles, 11 AK series rifles, 26 SLRs, 2 sniper rifles, 3 carbines, 17 Pt 303 rifles, 2



51 MM mortars, 2 MA assault rifles, 3 M79 grenade launchers, and 1 rifle with scope. Additionally, there are 18 single-shot breech-loaded guns, 11 single-barrel bolt action rifles, 6 pistols, 1 .22 caliber rifle, 2 Lathodes, 25 single bore guns, 3 country-made pistols, 4 muzzle-loaded rifles, another 6 single bore guns, 38 Pompis, and 1 more Lathode.

In terms of ammunition and explosives, the recovered items include 29 rounds of 5.56 mm, 80 rounds of 7.62 mm, 30 IEDs, 10 grenades, 9 Pompi shells, and 2 Lathode grenades.

These intelligence-based

coordinated operations in the hill districts represent a significant achievement for the Manipur Police, Assam Rifles/ Army and Central Security Forces in their ongoing efforts to restore normalcy, maintain public order, and ensure the safety and security of citizens and their property.

The Manipur Police reiterates its commitment to fostering a peaceful and secure Manipur. The public is urged to cooperate with the Police and Security Forces, and to promptly report any suspicious activity or information related to illegal arms to the nearest police station or the Central Control Room.

Manipur groups urge Shah not to renew SoO agreements over repeated violations

NIBIR DEKA
MANIPUR

Four organisations — Indigenous people forum Manipur, Meitei Alliance, Foothill Naga coordination committee and Thadou Inpi — have submitted a joint memorandum to Union Home Minister Amit Shah, urging the Government of India not to renew the Suspension of Operations (SoO) Agreements with Kuki mili-

tant groups, alleging repeated violations and a failure to maintain law and order.

In the memorandum, the groups claimed that the Kuki National Organisation (KNO) and United People’s Front (UPF), which are signatories to the SoO agreements, were responsible for inciting violence that began on May 3, 2023, in Churachandpur, including arson in Torbung and Kanvai.

The organisations stated that although the SoO Agreements were intended to ensure peace and lawfulness — explicitly barring violent acts, extortion, and possession of arms in public — these terms have been repeatedly breached. They pointed to a structural flaw within the agreement: the inclusion of the same militant groups in the Joint Monitoring Group (JMG) that is supposed to oversee violations, which,

The organisations stated that although the SoO Agreements were intended to ensure peace and lawfulness — explicitly barring violent acts, extortion, and possession of arms in public — these terms have been repeatedly breached.

mechanism meant to monitor it,” the memorandum read, adding that this setup severely limits the Manipur govern-

ment’s ability to act against violations.

The signatories further highlighted that the elected

state government had officially withdrawn from the SoO with groups like the Kuki National Army (KNA) and Zomi Revolutionary Army (ZRA) in March 2023, and formally opposed their renewal in January 2024.

Calling for peace and accountability, the memorandum recommended either abrogation of the SoO agreements or a comprehensive overhaul of their structure.

It also called for a re-election in the state to allow a popular government to decide on any future agreements, and for prosecution of any militants involved in violence, even if they are signatories to the SoO.

The groups emphasized that the SoO must not become a “protector of violence” but a genuine mechanism for ensuring non-violence and restoring normalcy in Manipur.

MANY TAKERS FOR END-OF-LIFE VEHICLE RULE TO CURB POLLUTION IN CITY

Delhi government has halted initiative citing 'certain issues'

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

Delhi vehicle owners have supported the policy restricting fuel supply to end-of-life vehicles (ELVs), calling it a positive step towards pollution control. The development comes as the Delhi government has written to the Commission for Air Quality Management (CAQM), seeking a hold on the directive banning fuel sale to ELVs in the national capital.

Speaking to reporters, a vehicle owner said, "I bought a Scotty in 2017. The decision (not to give fuel to end-of-life vehicles) was wrong for those who cannot afford to buy a new vehicle. When I see a vehicle emitting pollution, I tell them to get their pollution certificate made, because we have to suffer because of them. So this decision of the government is good."

Another vehicle owner said, "The steps the government is taking for Delhi are good. Pollution caused by

FUEL BAN FOR OLD VEHICLES: KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Policy bans refuelling petrol vehicles over 15 years, diesel over 10
- Vehicles identified through ANPR cameras at fuel stations across Delhi
- Government seeks temporary hold citing implementation challenges and cross-border fuel risk
- Opposition slams BJP for policy confusion, alleges links to auto industry



vehicles is high, so the steps being taken are good. If the vehicle is old, then it is the responsibility of the citizens to come forward. Similar steps should be taken in all metro cities..."

Following the reactions, the Delhi NCT government formally approached the Commission, urging it to pause the enforcement.

In a letter to the Commission, Delhi Minister for Environment, Forests, and Wildlife, Manjinder Singh Sirsa, wrote that soon after the implementation of the direction, which came

into effect on July 1, 2025, it was revealed that "certain issues" needed to be addressed before they could be fully implemented.

Under the Delhi government's policy, petrol vehicles older than 15 years and diesel vehicles older than 10 years are now denied refuelling at fuel stations in the city. "The Government of Delhi is fully aligned with the Commission's objective to phase out older, polluting vehicles and has implemented a comprehensive Air Pollution Mitigation Plan 2025 to this end," the

Minister wrote in his letter.

"The GNCTD has been complying with the directions of Hon'ble NGT and Hon'ble Supreme Court regarding implementing a ban on EOL vehicles, deregistering them and ensuring that they do not ply on Delhi roads," the letter read.

Many end-of-life vehicles have been denied fuel at fuel stations after being identified by Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR).

The Minister said because of "several critical operational and infrastructural challenges", it will not be

feasible to implement it at this juncture.

He argued that immediate implementation may be "premature and potentially counterproductive."

"A stage-wise implementation that begins only in Delhi will not serve its intended purpose.

It is highly likely to lead to vehicle owners procuring fuel from adjacent districts like Gurugram, Faridabad, and Ghaziabad, thereby circumventing the ban and potentially fostering an illegal cross-border market for fuel, which would further exacerbate the problem," the Minister's letter read.

"ANPR system is not implemented in the neighbouring states, which will again be an issue in the effective integration of the system with the system of neighbouring states, as and when the same is implemented. So far as our knowledge is concerned, neighbouring districts have not yet started installation of ANPR cameras in the fuel stations," the letter added.

Delhi HC raps DJB over water contamination

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

The Delhi High Court on Friday pulled up the Delhi Jal Board for supplying contaminated water in colonies and asked how the authorities could expect the citizens to "drink sewage mixed water".

A bench of Chief Justice D K Upadhyaya and Justice Anish Dayal was hearing a plea alleging residents of Yojana Vihar, Anand Vihar, Jagriti Enclave and other adjacent areas in east Delhi received "highly contaminated potable water" mixed with sewer/sewage in their household taps.

"Unless someone knows the doors of the court, you yourself can't do this? You are asking citizens of this city to drink sewage mixed water?" the bench asked.

The court, which on July 2 asked the DJB to conduct an inspection of the areas concerned, was informed that the agency found water supply pipelines in Yojana Vihar area to be very old and requiring replacement.

The DJB filed a status report based on its survey and agreed on the presence of old and damaged water supply pipes in several house con-



nections, including the petitioner's house and adjoining areas.

The DJB said a tender for replacing the pipes would be invited by July 7 and the contract would be awarded by July 17.

The project was proposed to be completed in 20 days from the date of the contract.

The bench directed that the work related to replacing old and damaged water supply pipes in and around these houses should be completed in any case by August 2025 and any failure would be viewed seriously by the court.

On the point of the sewage treatment plant, the DJB counsel informed the court about the ongoing desilting work, which would be completed by August.

DJB said in its status report that the water distribution

system in Yojana Vihar was installed 35 years ago, exceeding its operational life and requiring comprehensive replacement.

DJB assured of undertaking the work relating to replacement of water distribution network and prioritising the damaged sections based on availability of budget.

The court directed the DJB to file an affidavit giving the timeline in which the entire water distribution network in the area would be replaced.

"We also direct that authorities of DJB should be vigilant and take appropriate measures to check that booster pumps are not used during non-supply hours by the residents of the area and if any resident is found indulging in this, necessary action be taken in this regard," the bench said.

National Herald case: ED case very strange, Sonia argues in court

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

Senior advocate Abhishek Manu Singhvi representing Congress leader Sonia Gandhi on Friday argued that Enforcement Directorate's National Herald case was "truly a strange" one.

Singhvi began his rebuttal after additional solicitor general S V Raju for ED on July 3 concluded his argu-

leges Gandhis held the majority 76 per cent shares in Young Indian, which fraudulently usurped assets of AJL, in exchange for a Rs 90 crore loan.

Singhvi, however, submitted that the exercise was undertaken to make AJL debt free.

"Every company is entitled under law and does, every day, make their com-

CM Rekha shifts focus to people's access with new camp office

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

Delhi Chief Minister Rekha Gupta on Friday took part in a havan ceremony held during the inauguration of her camp office in the national capital. The event was attended by her husband Manish Gupta, son Nikunj Gupta, along with Ministers Manjinder Singh Sirsa, Manoj Tiwari, and Lieutenant Governor VK Saxena.

LG Saxena extended his best wishes to the Chief Minister and expressed confidence that public grievances would be effectively addressed from the new camp office. "This reflects her commitment to the people and their concerns. Going forward, the challenges and hardships faced by Delhi's citizens will be tackled directly from the CM's residence," he said.

Speaking on the occasion, Minister Manjinder Singh Sirsa contrasted the new initiative with previous administrations. "Earlier Chief Ministers built 'Sheeshmahals' and kept the public away. In contrast, our CM has opened a 'Janseva Kendra' to welcome the common people."

BJP MP Manoj Tiwari echoed similar sentiments, thanking CM Rekha Gupta

Minister for making her residence a 'Janseva Sadan'. Cameras were once forbidden in the previous government's 'Sheeshmahal', but today, we've made it a place of service." The inauguration comes a day after CM Rekha Gupta launched the Van Mahotsav 2025 under the Ek Ped Maa Ke Naam campaign, a tree plantation drive inspired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi. During the



for transforming the CM's residence into a service-oriented space. "I wholeheartedly thank the Chief

launch, she criticized the previous government for its lack of attention to environmental issues and urban greenery.

Kapil Mishra says 'Jan Sewa Sadan' cost less than Kejriwal's curtains

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

Delhi Minister Kapil Mishra on Friday lauded the inauguration of Chief Minister Rekha Gupta's newly opened Jan Sewa Sadan, describing it as a transparent and people-centric initiative. He contrasted the project with what he called the "secrecy and extravagance" of the previous administration's residence renovations.

According to Mishra, the cost of the Jan Sewa Sadan is "less than the cost of curtains in Arvind Kejriwal's Sheesh Mahal," a reference to the earlier AAP-led government's alleged high expenditure on the CM's residence. "This is the first time in 11 years that the Chief Minis-

ter's residence or office has been opened to the public. Media and cameras are welcome to see all the arrangements made for the common people. The entire Jan Sewa Sadan was built transpar-



ently, and its tender document is public — unlike the Sheesh Mahal's," Mishra said. Chief Minister Rekha Gupta inaugurated the Jan Sewa Sadan at her camp

office earlier in the day. A havan ceremony marked the occasion, attended by her husband Manish Gupta and son Nikunj Gupta. Separately, the Public Works Department (PWD) recently issued a Rs 60 lakh tender for renovation work at the CM's official residence, Bungalow Number 1, where she will reside. A second property, Bungalow Number 2, will serve as her camp office. As per the tender details, the renovation includes interior and electrical upgrades. It also covers the installation of five televisions (Rs 9.3 lakh), fourteen air conditioners (Rs 7.7 lakh), fourteen CCTV cameras (Rs 5.74 lakh), and a UPS system for uninterrupted power supply (Rs 2 lakh).



ments on the point of cognisance of the chargesheet filed in the case.

"This is truly a strange case. More than strange. Unprecedented. This is an alleged case of money laundering, without any property, without use or projection of property," Singhvi argued.

The ED has accused Sonia and Rahul Gandhi, late Congress leaders Motilal Vora and Oscar Fernandes aside from Suman Dubey, Sam Pitroda and a private company Young Indian of conspiracy and money laundering over the fraudulent takeover of properties valued over Rs 2,000 crore belonging to the Associated Journals Limited (AJL), which published National Herald newspaper. ED al-

panies get free by a variety of instruments. So you take away the debt and assign it to another entity. So this company becomes debt free," Singhvi said.

He said that Young Indian was a not-for-profit company. "Means it cannot give dividends, it cannot give perks, it cannot give salaries, it cannot give those bonuses. It can give nothing," the senior lawyer argued.

Singhvi said the ED did not do anything for several years and instead picked up a private complaint.

"They are, obviously people associated with the Congress. To have the National Herald in a body not associated with the Congress would be worse than having Hamlet without the Prince of Denmark," he said.

1,347 extra-curricular seats at Delhi University

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

From divinity and dance to digital media and debate, Delhi University is offering 1,347 seats under the Extra-Curricular Activities (ECA) quota for the 2025-26 academic session, catering to a wide range of student talents across 14 categories.

The 14 ECA categories for which DU is admitting students this year are creative writing (English and Hindi), debate (English and Hindi), digital media (photography, filmmaking, animation), divinity, fine arts (sketching, painting, sculpture), music-



vocal (Indian and western), music-instrumental (Indian and western), dance (Indian classical, Indian folk, western, choreography), theatre, quiz, National Cadet Corps (NCC), National Service Scheme (NSS), and Yoga.

Each category includes a range of sub-disciplines, allowing students to apply as

per their specific interests and skills. All admissions under the ECA quota will be managed centrally through DU's online portal.

"The trials, allocations and entire admission process, including for the Divinity category, will be conducted through a centralised ECA committee and not by indi-

vidual colleges," Prof Deepti Taneja, Convenor of DU's ECA Admissions Committee, told PTI.

According to the official ECA seat matrix, a total of 13 seats have been allocated under the divinity category this year, spread across four colleges: Sri Guru Tegh Bahadur Khalsa College (4 seats), Sri Guru Nanak Dev Khalsa College (2), Sri Guru Gobind Singh College of Commerce (4), and Mata Sundri College for Women (3). These colleges are maintained by the Delhi Sikh Gurdwara Management Committee.

Delhi zoo's monsoon measures: Infra fixes, herbal solutions

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

To ensure animal safety and prevent flooding in enclosures during heavy rainfall, the National Zoological Park in Delhi has ramped up staff preparedness, initiated key infrastructure repairs, ordered new water pumps, and adopted traditional remedies like turmeric and neem oil to deal with seasonal infections and flies.

With the monsoon officially arriving in the national capital, zoo authori-

ties have implemented their comprehensive monsoon action plan to avoid incidents of waterlogging that disrupted operations in the past.

Last year, the zoo faced a lengthy power outage and flooding in several enclosures after water entered a transformer.

Zoo director Sanjeet Kumar assured that critical steps have already been taken, including repair and construction of rain sheds, clearing and desilting of drainage lines, and test-



ing and ordering of new pumps.

"All our pumps have been repaired and tested. We've ordered additional pumps to ensure we can flush out water as it pours,"

he said, adding that additional manpower was deployed to keep pumping operations running 24x7.

Herbivore enclosures, especially those housing deer, have been given spe-

cial attention, as they are more prone to water accumulation. Soil mounds have been created inside the enclosures to provide animals with elevated ground in the case of flooding.

"We've also used waterproof sheets in kraals and feeding platforms to protect the animals," Kumar added.

Apart from infrastructural measures, the zoo is continuing the use of traditional herbal solutions for animal care. Turmeric will be used on wounds and foot lesions to help dry and heal

them faster, while neem oil will act as a natural disinfectant and fly repellent during the wet season.

The zoo staff is being equipped with monsoon gear, including gumboots, umbrellas, and torches to ensure round-the-clock response. "Essential monsoon medicines have been procured and the team is ready," the director said, further stating that regular internal reviews will be held, and coordination with local authorities will continue throughout the season.

clear its toxic skies. This is the first time the technique will be used in the capital specifically to combat pollution, marking a new direction in the city's environmental strategy.

The initiative, titled "Technology Demonstration and Evaluation of Cloud Seeding as an Alternative for Delhi NCR Pollution Mitigation," is being jointly implemented by the Delhi Environment Department and IIT Kanpur. Originally scheduled for early July 2025, the operation has been pushed to late August, when atmospheric conditions are expected to better support rainfall.

Cloud seeding involves dispersing particles like silver

The project has received necessary permissions from the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA). Real-time cloud monitoring will be managed by the India Meteorological Department (IMD), while changes in air quality will be tracked by CAAQMS stations across the region. The total budget for the pilot stands at Rs 3.21 crore.

Though cloud seeding has been used elsewhere to increase rainfall, its effectiveness in reducing air pollution is still under study. Officials see this as a short-term relief measure, not a permanent fix. Experts stress the need for deeper, long-term solutions to address Delhi's chronic pollution crisis.

BIHAR SPECIAL ROLLS REVISION IN MAY DROP 20% VOTERS, SAYS CONGRESS

CEC assures fairness in Bihar SIR, but Opposition alleges voter exclusion plans

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

Following the meeting of representatives of political party with the Election Commission of India, Congress leader Pawan Khera on Friday claimed that the Chief Election Commissioner Gyanesh Kumar has stated to the delegation that a “20 per cent exclusion” is likely to happen after the Special Intensive Revision of electoral rolls in Bihar.

Speaking to ANI, Khera said, “Gyanesh Kumar

BIHAR VOTER LIST REVISION ROW

- Congress claims CEC indicated a possible 20% exclusion during electoral roll update
- ECI says Special Intensive Revision (SIR) is proceeding fairly and on schedule
- Opposition fears poor and marginalised voters may be disenfranchised
- EC assures strict adherence to law and inclusion of all eligible voters



clearly stated to the delegation that we believe a 20% exclusion is likely to happen. When they intend to exclude, what can we do? Their intentions are clear, not his but those of those above him... It took one year, from 2003 to 2004, when the same exercise was conducted in Bihar. Now, you'll do it in 25 days, implying you want to remove your name without checking papers. You know which class names to deduct... We have many options--from roads to parliament and others--that are available to us. No institution can be bullied in

this country.” On Wednesday, the Election Commission of India (ECI) had met representatives of various political parties at Nirvachan Sadan, said the Election Commission.

Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) Gyanesh Kumar on Wednesday said that the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) process in Bihar is progressing smoothly and on schedule, despite concerns raised by opposition parties about possible voter exclusion.

Speaking at a training session for Booth Level Officers

(BLOs), Gyanesh Kumar said, “The implementation of Special Intensive Revision (SIR) in Bihar is running as per schedule with the active participation of all election staff and all political parties in a transparent manner. Despite apprehensions of some persons, SIR will ensure that all eligible persons will be included.”

The Special Intensive Revision is a focused voter list update exercise conducted by the Election Commission of India (ECI) to ensure electoral rolls are accurate ahead of upcoming elections.

Opposition parties, including the Rashtriya Janata Dal (RJD), have expressed concern that the SIR process may be misused to disenfranchise voters, particularly the poor and marginalised communities.

In response, the ECI stated that the exercise is being conducted strictly in line with the provisions of Article 326 of the Constitution and the Representation of the People Act, 1950. It said the aim is to remove ineligible entries while ensuring that no eligible voter is left out.

“Commission stated that SIR is being conducted per provisions of Article 326, RP Act 1950 & instructions issued on 24.06.2025. Party representatives raised concerns related to SIR. Each concern which was raised by any member of PP was fully addressed by the Commission,” the ECI said in an official post.

The Commission also clarified that while some party representatives had prior appointments, others were allowed to join the meeting

Flood situation in Odisha is under control: Water Resources Department

TDG NETWORK
BHUBANESHWAR

The Water Resources Department of the Odisha government has said that the flood situation in the state is currently under control, with water levels of several rivers receding.

Speaking to reporters on Thursday, Sagar Mohanty, the Engineer In Chief, Procurement in Water Resources Department of the Odisha government, said, “Currently, the flood situation in Odisha is under control. Almost all the rivers are receding, including Subarnarekha, Budhabalanga, and Jalaka. The flood levels are currently below the danger level... The water that has entered the locality is also receding, and the river is falling...”

For today, the India Meteorological Department (IMD) has issued an orange alert for heavy rainfall in the districts of Sundergarh, Jharsuguda, Sambalpur, and Baragarh.

A yellow alert, or “watch,”



has been issued for the districts of Nuaparha, Balangir, Subarnapur, Baula, Kandhamal, Gajapati, Rayagada, Koraput, Malkangiri, and Nabarangpur.

Meanwhile, the India Meteorological Department (IMD) said on Thursday that the state has already received 29 per cent of the excess rainfall.

“In the last 24 hours, there was widespread rainfall activity over the state, with five places recording very heavy rainfall, and seven places recorded heavy

rainfall activity. Till today, 305.8 mm rainfall has occurred across the state... There is 29% excess rainfall already,” said Manorama Mohanty, Director, IMD Bhubaneswar.

She added, “An upward cyclone circulation lies over North Odisha and the adjoining area of West Bengal... Odisha is likely to experience good rainfall activity, with heavy to very heavy rainfall expected over the state. Over the next 24 hours, heavy to very heavy rainfall is likely to occur at isolated places in the districts of Sundargarh, Jharsuguda, Bargarh and Sambalpur... Widespread rainfall activity is very likely over the next 24 hours...”

On June 30, Odisha Minister of Rural Development Rabi Narayan Naik had said, “... Districts like Balasore & Mayurbhanj have been affected more, and the Odisha government has announced the closure of all the schools in these areas because of the amount of rain these areas are receiving...”

Will start accepting Haj applications for 2026 within a week: Min Rijiju

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

Union Minister of Minority Affairs Kiren Rijiju on Friday announced that the Union Government will begin accepting applications for the Haj pilgrimage in 2026 within a week, urging pilgrims to ensure timely submissions of documents to avoid future complications ahead of the pilgrimage.

Speaking to reporters, Rijiju outlined the preparations and new measures to facilitate a smooth pilgrimage process, emphasising digitalisation and adherence to deadlines set by the Saudi Arabian government.

“Within a week, we will start accepting Haj applications for 2026... I request people to fill out their applications on time so they do not face any problems in the future. The Saudi



Arabian government has set many strict deadlines,” Rijiju stated.

He directed tour operators to strictly adhere to the timelines and instructed the Haj Committee of India to deposit payments to the Saudi government before the deadline, ensuring compliance with international requirements.

Rijiju also addressed several logistical and policy considerations for the upcoming Haj, noting separate accommodations for men and women during the pilgrimage and that a com-

panion was mandatory for pilgrims above the age of 65 years.

“I strictly instruct the tour operators to adhere to the set timelines. I have directed the Haj Committee of India to deposit the payment to the Saudi Arabian government before the deadline... I have been given suggestions regarding the accommodations. We are considering the request for separate accommodations for men and women... A companion is mandatory to look after pilgrims above 65 years of age. We will also offer an option for a short Haj,” he added.

He also stated that the entire process will be digital and that food choices will also be tailored to regional preferences.

“The entire process will be digital... We will provide food choices state-wise so that pilgrims can eat food to their taste,” the Union Minister added.

Assam, Meghalaya to sign MoU to define boundaries between States

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma on Friday announced the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to define boundaries between Assam and Meghalaya.

In a post on social media X, the CM wrote that the signed MoU would help people and administration have clarity on the jurisdiction and would also allow governance to shine in the “once grey areas.”

“In 1972, when Meghalaya was carved out, a significant portion of its boundary with Assam was left ambiguous, often leading to chaos and



tension between our states. 50 years later, in 2022, under the leadership of Adarniya @narendramodi Ji and in the presence of Adarniya @AmitShah Ji, our two states signed a historic MoU to begin defining our boundaries. 6/12 disputed areas have been resolved and earmarked for boundary works, and fruits of that agreement are now flowing in as the first pillars get erected.

So, how do these pillars

improve harmony between the sister states?

People and administration on both sides now have clarity on jurisdiction. Governance can finally shine in these “once grey areas”, the post read.

Meanwhile, on July 3, CM Sarma challenged the Congress to say that cow slaughter in the name of sacrifice was a “heinous crime”, stating that it would take seven lifetimes for the Opposition party to say it.

“I challenge Congress to muster the courage to tell the Muslim community in Assam that cow slaughter in the name of sacrifice is a heinous crime. They will never be able to say it. When it comes to the rights of Gau mata (cow), the BJP does not care about any vote bank,” Sarma posted on X.

He said that the BJP has the courage to say that Islam doesn't mandate cow sacrifice and allows for the sacrifices of other animals.

“They will never speak against Qurbani. However, the BJP has the courage to say it clearly: Islam doesn't mandate cow sacrifice specifically. Qurbani can be of other animals, too.

'Ek Ped Maa Ke Naam': 50 crore saplings to be planted, says UP CM

TDG NETWORK
LUCKNOW

Addressing the Mango Festival 2025 in Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath, on Friday, lauded the 'Ek Ped Maa Ke Naam' initiative and said that 50 crore saplings will be planted on July 9.

CM Adityanath said, “I remember that in 2017, when we organised the plantation campaign, I was unable to get even five crore saplings. Now, this time, when we are initiating a large plantation drive under the aegis of the 'Ek Ped Maa Ke Naam' campaign, which we will join on 9th July, we have got 50 crore saplings for planting.”

He claimed that using modern technology, a farmer in Uttar Pradesh is earn-



ing a net profit of Rs 1 lakh per acre.

“Our farmer is earning a net profit of Rs 1 lakh in one acre. This shows that he has now started farming in a modern way; the result is visible to us. Similarly, there is new technology sugarcane,” the Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister said.

“Right now, we have established some centres of excellence for this purpose. Agricultural Science Centres are working in a new

way. And to advance these methods, now the Horticulture Department, along with the participation of the forest department and the private sector, has started the work,” he said.

On the Mango festival, he said, “There will also be various seminars here. Buyer and seller meet will be held, and progressive farmers and agricultural scientists will share their experiences.”

Meanwhile, on Thursday, CM Yogi took part in the launch event of the 27 Integrated Manufacturing and Logistics Clusters (IMLC).

Sharing an X post, he wrote, “Participated today in the event organised in Lucknow for the launching of 27 Integrated Manufacturing and Logistics Clusters (IMLC).

PM Modi's foreign policy 'faulty', creating enemies: Kharge

TDG NETWORK
HYDERABAD

AICC president Mallikarjun Kharge on Friday called the BJP-led NDA government's foreign policy “faulty” and as a result, India has enemies in all corners.

Addressing the ‘Samajika Nyaya Samara Bheri,’ here, Kharge alleged that PM Modi has travelled to 42 countries in the world, but so far he has not visited Manipur, where people are dying.

“His foreign policy is not good, because of which we have enemies from all corners. On one side, there is China and on the other, Pakistan. Today, Nepal is also distancing itself from us. Everybody is moving away from us,” said the Congress veteran.



He blamed Modi for “ruining” the country's economy during the past 11 years and for “destroying” the Constitution.

“If someone gives Modi a cap or a medal he will wear it and go around,” he mocked at the PM, demanding that he should care for Indian farmers and people. “And Modi ji, where are you? He is visiting eight countries, but he's not looking towards his country's people. He is not looking at the farmers of this country,” he added.

Chhattisgarh CM reviews IT initiatives

TDG NETWORK
RAIPUR

Chief Minister Vishnu Deo Sai on Thursday reaffirmed the state's commitment to digital transformation, calling electronics and information technology a key pillar in the vision of ‘Viksit Chhattisgarh 2047’, aligned with Prime Minister Narendra Modi's ‘Viksit Bharat 2047’ roadmap.

While chairing a high-level review meeting of the Electronics and Information Technology Department at Mantralaya Mahanadi Bhawan, CM Sai directed officials to accelerate the rollout of mobile towers and fibre optic networks, particularly in remote and underserved regions such as Bastar and Surguja. “In order to ensure governance that is efficient, transparent and accessible,



it is essential to strengthen digital infrastructure across the state,” said CM Sai.

Officials informed during the meeting that a target of installing over 5,000 mobile towers has been set, which will be achieved in a phased manner within a defined timeline. Under e-District 2.0, the government will expand its current 85 online services to include 250 more, enabling citizens to access key schemes and facilities

from home. The move will save time and reduce travel costs for the public. The CM also directed officials to upgrade the State Data Centre to Tier-III standards for enhanced digital reliability.

In the meeting, Chief Minister Sai inquired about the progress of major projects run by the department in the state, like Atal Monitoring Portal, Niyad Nellnar and LWE Saturation Dashboard, BharatNet Phase-2, Chhattisgarh State Data Centre (CGSDC), Aadhar Enrollment In-House Model, e-District 2.0, CG Swan, e-Procurement and Capacity Building and other schemes.

Principal Secretary Mrs. Niharika Barik highlighted key digital milestones, including the long-pending data centre upgrade tender, now finalised after four years.

More Village More Water: Chhattisgarh celebrates Water Conservation Week

TDG NETWORK
BALRAMPUR

The Chhattisgarh Government is celebrating Water Conservation Week under the 'More Village More Water Campaign' from 30 June to 7 July. Nayantara Singh Tomar, Chief Executive Officer of District Panchayat Balrampur, shared information about the water conservation campaign with media.

Ministry of Jal Shakti had launched the Jal Shakti Abhiyan (JSA) in the year 2019 in 1,592 blocks out of 2,836 blocks in 256 water-stressed districts of the country. In 2021, “Jal Shakti Abhiyan: Catch the Rain” (JSA: CTR) with the theme “Catch the Rain - Where it Falls When it Falls” was launched by Hon'ble Prime Minister subsuming Catch the Rain (CTR) campaign to cover all the blocks of all districts



C R Paatil, Minister, Jal Shakti, launched Jal Shakti Abhiyan: Catch the Rain - 2025 with the theme “Jal Sanchay Jan Bhagidari - Jan Jagrukta Ki Or” on 22nd March 2025, World Water Day.

(rural as well as urban areas) across the country. JSA: CTR has become an annual feature since 2021.

C R Paatil, Minister, Jal Shakti, launched Jal Shakti Abhiyan: Catch the Rain - 2025 with the theme “Jal

vergence and innovative financing mechanisms with special focus on 148 districts identified by CGWB.

Five focused interventions, like in the previous years, include (i) water conservation and rainwater harvesting; (ii) enumerating, geo-tagging & making inventory of all water bodies; preparation of scientific plans for water conservation based on it; (iii) setting up of Jal Shakti Kendras in all districts; (iv)

Intensive afforestation; and (v) awareness generation.

“Khandwa is the district that has done the best work in water conservation across the entire country. The Ministry of Jal Shakti of the Government of India has recognised it... Awareness about water has also increased throughout the state...” Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Mohan Yadav had said on the Jal Ganga Conservation Campaign on June 30.

INDIAN STOCKS SETTLE IN GREEN ON FRIDAY

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI

Keeping the intraday gains intact, Indian stock indices settled in the green on Friday, despite continued foreign portfolio investor (FPI) outflows.

This marks the first jump in the domestic indices after multiple sessions of losses.

The Sensex closed at 83,432.89 points, up 193.42 points or 0.23 per cent. The Nifty closed at 25,461.00 points, up 55.70 points or 0.22 per cent. Sensex and Nifty on a cumulative basis declined 0.4-0.7 per cent during this week.

Among the sectoral indices, Nifty FMCG, Nifty IT, Nifty media, Nifty pharma, Nifty PSU bank, Nifty realty, Nifty oil and gas were the top movers, while Nifty metal and Nifty auto were the top losers, NSE data showed.

“The Indian market is experiencing a pause as investors adopt a wait-and-watch strategy ahead of the impending US tariff deadline, with mixed global cues. Ongoing FII outflows reflect a



risk-off approach, while DII inflows are offering partial support,” said Vinod Nair, Head of Research, Geojit Investments Limited.

“Following the recent rally, main indices are hovering near peak valuation levels, limiting further upside, which is highly dependent on Q1 earnings and details of the trade deal. In the mid- and small-cap space, the market has shifted to being more stock-specific following the recent recovery,” Nair added.

Barring Friday, India’s stock benchmarks remained in the red this week, which analysts attribute to profit booking by investors.

“After 5 straight sessions

of losses, the market remained in a consolidation phase as investors stayed on the sidelines ahead of the July 9 deadline set by U.S. President Donald Trump for trade tariff negotiations,” said Sundar Kewat, Technical and Derivatives Analyst, Ashika Institutional Equity - Ashika Stock Broking part of Ashika Group.

Analysts earlier opined uncertainties around extension in Trump reciprocal tariffs beyond July 9, and an India-US bilateral trade agreement weighed on the Indian stock indices this week.

Last week, Indian stock indices stayed in the green for the fourth straight ses-

GOLD DECLINES RS 600 TO RS 99,020/10 G

Gold prices declined Rs 600 to Rs 99,020 per 10 grams in the national capital on Friday due to fresh selling by stockists, according to the All India Sarafa Association.

The yellow metal of 99.9 per cent purity had settled at Rs 99,620 per 10 grams on Thursday.

Gold of 99.5 per cent purity slipped Rs 500 to Rs 98,500 per 10 grams (inclusive of all taxes). It had closed at Rs 99,000 per 10 grams in the previous market close.

“Gold prices declined on Friday as the US dollar and treasury yields moved higher following stronger

than expected US macro-economic data.

“Furthermore, the macro data reduced the expectation of an interest rate cut by the US Federal Reserve, which also negatively impacted gold prices,” Saumil Gandhi, Senior Analyst, Commodities at HDFC Securities, said.

Silver prices also plunged Rs 1,000 to Rs 1,04,800 per kilogram (inclusive of all taxes) on Friday. It had finished at Rs 1,05,800 per kg in the previous market close.

Spot gold in the international markets went up marginally to USD 3,334.45 per ounce.

sion, lending support from positive global cues, relative peace on the Israel-Iran conflict front, and hopes of a possible extension of the July 9 tariff deadline by the US administration.

At a broader level, India’s strong domestic fundamentals, a responsive RBI, and good monsoon conditions have been supporting the financial markets. US markets are hitting all-time

highs, and the US dollar is weakening; as a result, emerging markets like India are benefiting. A comfortable inflation number in India is another positive.

In 2024, Sensex and Nifty accumulated a growth of about 9-10 per cent each. In 2023, Sensex and Nifty gained 16-17 per cent, on a cumulative basis. In 2022, they gained a mere 3 per cent each.

Govt extends NPS tax benefits to new unified pension scheme

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI

The Finance Ministry has announced that all tax benefits available under the National Pension System (NPS) will also apply to the Unified Pension Scheme (UPS).

The announcement is a significant move that will make UPS more attractive for central government employees.

The Unified Pension Scheme was introduced earlier this year as an option under NPS for recruits joining the central government civil services from April 1, 2025.

Existing government employees who are already under NPS have also been given a one-time option to



switch to UPS.

To make this new pension plan smoother to implement, the Pension Fund Regulatory and Development Authority (PFRDA) issued the necessary rules and regulations in March 2025.

Now, with the latest decision, the government has

ensured that employees opting for UPS will get the same tax relief and incentives as those available under NPS.

This includes deductions on contributions and other tax-saving benefits, making the scheme more financially appealing.

The decision brings parity

between the two schemes and provides a level playing field for employees choosing UPS over the traditional NPS.

“The inclusion of UPS under the tax framework marks another step forward in the Government’s effort to strengthen retirement security for Central Government employees through transparent, flexible and tax-efficient options,” the Finance Ministry stated in a statement.

The Unified Pension Scheme (UPS) is a pension scheme for central government employees in India, introduced as an option alongside the National Pension System (NPS).

The objective of the scheme is to provide a more predictable and secure re-

tirement income for government employees.

The scheme offers an assured pension, with the government contributing 18.5 per cent of the employee’s basic salary and dearness allowance and the employee contributing 10 per cent.

The scheme is designed to replace the NPS for new recruits and allow existing NPS members to opt in.

On the other hand, the National Pension System is a retirement benefit Scheme introduced by the Government of India to facilitate a regular income post-retirement for all the subscribers.

PFRDA (Pension Fund Regulatory and Development Authority) is the governing body for NPS.

India does not enter trade deals based on deadline: Goyal

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI

Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal on Friday emphasised that India will only enter into trade agreements, including the proposed US Bilateral Trade Agreement (BTA), when they serve the country’s national interests and offer mutual benefits.

Speaking on the sidelines of the 16th Toy Biz B2B expo in New Delhi, Goyal made it clear that India’s approach to international trade negotiations remains firm and principled.



“It should be a win-win agreement, and only when India’s interests are safeguarded -- national interest will always be supreme --

and keeping that in mind, if a good deal is formed, India is always ready to engage with developed countries,” the minister stated.

Goyal emphasised that India negotiates on its own terms. The minister revealed that India is currently engaged in trade discussions with multiple countries across different continents.

“Discussions are ongoing with various countries -- be it the European Union, New Zealand, Oman, the US, Chile, or Peru. Talks about agreements are underway with many nations,” he

said.

However, Goyal stressed that the multiplicity of negotiations does not mean India is in a rush to conclude deals. “A Free Trade Agreement is only possible when there is mutual benefit,” he explained.

“India never enters into trade deals based on deadlines or time pressure. A deal is accepted only when it is fully matured, well-negotiated, and in the national interest,” Goyal stated.

This approach reflects India’s confidence in its negotiating position and its commitment to secur-

ing favourable terms for its economy and businesses.

At the toy expo, Goyal expressed optimism about the growth potential of India’s toy manufacturing sector, highlighting both domestic and international opportunities.

“I am sure with the high quality goods I am seeing here, they will all be finding good market with the whole gulf region all the 6 countries of the Middle East as they are today finding in nearly 153 countries in the world,” the minister said, praising the quality of Indian toy products.

Malabar Gold inaugurates manufacturing site in Hyderabad

AGENCIES
MUMBAI

Malabar Gold & Diamonds, the 5th largest jewellery retailer globally with over 400 showrooms across 13 countries, has launched its state-of-the-art, fully integrated jewellery manufacturing unit, the largest of its kind, in Hyderabad, Telangana. Located at the General Park, Maheshwaram in Ranga Reddy district and spread over 3.45 lakh sq. ft, the first of its kind integrated manufacturing unit marks the group’s largest among its 14 manufacturing units across India and the GCC countries.

The integrated manufacturing facility brings all the critical operations such as



design, refining, manufacturing, quality assurance, hallmarking, warehousing and supply chain management under one roof. The unit has an annual production capacity of over 4.7 tonnes of gold jewellery and 1.8 lakh carats of diamond jewellery along with an annual gold refining capacity of

78 tonnes and employs over 2,750 skilled artisans from 18 states while ensuring safety, security, well-being and convenience of the workforce. The facility has 40% of its workforce recruited from local population and maintains workforce composition with an overall male-to-female ratio of 80:20.

Crypto Boom: India needs regulatory protection now

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI

The crypto revolution in India is no longer confined only to tech start-ups in Bengaluru or investment firms in Mumbai. From the narrow lanes of Jaipur to the by-lanes of Coimbatore and Dibrugarh, a new wave of financial participation is unfolding, which is driven not by metro professionals but by citizens living in Tier-2 and Tier-3 cities who see digital assets as a ladder to financial stability. Industry statistics indicate that roughly 50 per cent of India’s crypto trading volume is currently coming from these smaller cities, and that participation is accelerating at over 40 per cent annually in several areas.

What is more surprising is the level of grassroots energy. Training academies in cities like Nagpur are seeing record enrolment. One trainer alone claims to have taught over 1,500 newcomers since 2023.

What’s fueling this boom outside the urban core is not just curiosity or speculation, it is practical economic necessity. In many tier-2 towns, access to traditional banking, capital markets, or even stable incomes is limited. Small business owners, homemakers, and students are using crypto to bypass these structural barriers. The average trade sizes, around Rs 10,000, reflect a cautious but hope-

Sebi bans US-based Jane Street from securities market

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI

Markets regulator Sebi has barred US-based Jane Street Group from the securities markets and directed the group to disgorge unlawful gains of Rs 4,843 crore for allegedly manipulating stock indices through positions taken in derivatives segment.

This could be the highest disgorgement amount ever directed by the Securities and Exchange Board of India (Sebi).

In its interim order, the regulator has debarred JSI Investments, JSI2 Investments Pvt Ltd, Jane Street Singapore Pte Ltd, and Jane Street Asia Trading — entities collectively referred to as the Jane Street Group — from trading until further notice, while continuing its investigation.

Established in 2000, Jane Street Group LLC is a global proprietary trading firm in the financial services industry. It employs more than 2,600 people across five offices in the US, Europe, and Asia, and conducts trading operations in 45 countries.

The Jane Street (JS) Group has come under Sebi’s scrutiny for allegedly manipulating index levels in the stock market to earn illegal profits, primarily through the highly liquid Bank Nifty and Nifty index options segments.

An investigation by Sebi revealed that over 21 expiry days between January 2023 and May 2025, the group executed large trades in the



underlying cash and futures markets to influence index movements and profit from massive positions in the options market.

Two key strategies were identified— one involved buying heavily in Bank Nifty stocks and futures in the morning and selling them aggressively in the afternoon to create a softer close, while the other involved concentrated selling or buying in the last two hours of the expiry day to sway index levels.

These actions helped the group earn illegal profits of about Rs 4,843 crore, even as they incurred smaller losses in cash and futures trades, the regulator said.

Sebi also noted that between January 2023 and March 2025, the JS Group recorded substantial trading activity across various segments of the market. The group made gains of Rs 44,358 crore from index options trading, which formed the bulk of their profits.

However, these were partially offset by losses of Rs 7,208 crore in stock futures, Rs 191 crore in index futures, and Rs 288 crore

Microsoft closes its Pakistan office after 25 years

AGENCIES
KARACHI

Tech giant Microsoft has announced to shut down its limited operations in Pakistan as part of its global strategy to reduce workforce, which various stakeholders termed on Friday as a troubling sign for the country’s economy. Microsoft, while closing its office in Pakistan on Thursday after 25 years, cited global restructuring and a shift to a cloud-based, partner-led model.

The move came as the tech giant cut roughly 9,100 jobs worldwide (or about 4 per cent of its workforce) in its largest layoff round since 2023.

Jawwad Rehman, former founding Country Manager of Microsoft Pakistan, urged the government and IT minister to engage with the tech giants with a bold KPI (Key Performance Indicators) driven plan.

He said the exit reflected



the current business climate. Even global giants like Microsoft find it unsustainable to stay, he posted on LinkedIn.

Former Pakistan president Arif Alvi, in a post on X, also expressed concern over Microsoft shutting down operations.

It is a troubling sign for our economic future, he wrote.

He claimed Microsoft once considered Pakistan for expansion, but that instability led the company to choose

in the cash market. After accounting for all gains and losses, the JS Group reported a net total profit of Rs 36,671 crore during this period, Sebi noted.

The case stems from media reports in April 2024, which suggested that Jane Street and its related entities may have used unauthorised proprietary trading strategies in the Indian options market.

Sebi noted that the JS Group continued to carry out suspicious trading activities, mainly near market closing on expiry day, by making large and aggressive trades to unfairly influence the index, even after receiving a warning in February and making promises to the NSE to stop such practices.

“Such egregious behaviour, in clear disregard/ defiance of the explicit advisory issued to them by NSE in February 2025, amply demonstrates that unlike the vast majority of Foreign Portfolio Investors and other market participants, JS Group is not a good faith actor that can be, or deserves to be, trusted.

Vietnam instead by late 2022.

The opportunity was lost, he wrote.

Jawwad explained that Microsoft didn’t operate a full commercial base in Pakistan, relying instead on liaison offices focused on enterprise, education, and government clients.

Over recent years, much of that work had already shifted to local partners, while licensing and contracts were managed from its European hub in Ireland.

What is more surprising is the level of grassroots energy. Training academies in cities like Nagpur are seeing record enrolment. One trainer alone claims to have taught over 1,500 newcomers since 2023.

internet more accessible, there has already been a convergence of sorts. During and after the pandemic, a remote-work culture and an internet-first mindset allowed even remote users to explore crypto markets. Many young Indians now turn to crypto not for quick gains, but because it represents a real opportunity to understand and participate in the global financial ecosystem.

What is more surprising is the level of grassroots energy. Training academies in cities like Nagpur are seeing record enrolment. One trainer alone claims to have taught over 1,500 newcomers since 2023. Platforms tailored for Indian users have also played a role in making onboarding easier.

Social media, YouTube tutorials in vernacular languages, and peer-to-peer discussions have helped simplify what would otherwise be intimidating tech. This kind of access and aspiration explains why India is now ranked number one globally in grassroots crypto adoption.

Women are also not left behind in this movement and are joining in greater numbers too. A recent survey recorded a ten-fold increase in female participation, with states like Uttar Pradesh and Rajasthan contributing significantly. For many of these users, crypto represents financial inclusion, independence, and the ability to explore wealth-building avenues beyond traditional gold or savings accounts.

TIBET – THE COLLECTIVE FAILURE OF THE GLOBAL COMMUNITY

OPINION

MAJ. VIJAI SINGH MANKOTIA



Sixty Five years have gone by since His Holiness The Dalai Lama, after having fled Tibet, took residence in the small hill town of Mcleodganj in Dharamshala, Himachal Pradesh. Ten years earlier in 1951, the world had witnessed in silence the Peoples Liberation Army of Mao Zedong's China carry out its naked aggression and annexation of Tibet. A peace loving people, persuing their religious activities and preserving their rich culture were invaded and forced into subjugation. That silence continues,

but for a few resultions and photo ops with the Dalai Lama many a times with US congressional leaders, parliamentary and Tibet support groups and organisations espousing the cause of freedom and democracy. My own memory takes me back to the autumn and winter of 1962. The unfamiliar and inhospitable terrain of the North East Frontier (NEFA and present day Arunachal Pradesh) looms large before my eyes. The Gorkha Battalion in which I'd been commissioned just a few months earlier, had been stationed in Delhi after its tenure in the Naushehra region of J&K. As news of hostilities breaking-out with China started spreading, our unit was put on notice for induction into the war zone. A few days later we were airlifted to the North East Frontier region. At that young age we had certain romantic notions of battles and wars, but soon the ugliness and the terror of war hit us. Our own unpreparedness, the adven-

turism of Lt. General BM Kaul, the blue-eyed boy and reported relative of Prime Minister Nehru, the miscalculations of Defense Minister VK Krishna Menon and his coterie all led to a most shameful debacle of our army, appropriately termed by Brigadier JP Dalvis as 'the Himalayan Blunder'. During the war and post cease-fire, we were to come across countless refugees fleeing Tibet. In the Lohit Frontier Division there were atleast half a dozen such camps and shelters for them. The condition of these Tibetan refugees was pathetic. Men and women old and young, children without food for days, drained of energy and stamina, many of them sick, needing to be piggy-backed by stronger youth, faltering, fear and hopelessness, pain and suffering showing in their eyes, women unable to hold back their tears, brutalities and atrocities of the occupying forces of China, sending shudders down ones spine. And still we remained silent. 1989 brought the Noble Peace Prize for His Holiness The Dalai Lama. Jubilations and celebrations. The Prophet and Apostle of Peace! Compassion, Tolerance, Forgiveness, Universal Brotherhood and Harmony! The torch bearer of Budha's

teachings. We embraced his philosophy, his message of 'love all, hate none'. Congressional medals followed, honours and accolades, world leaders hailing his wisdom, sympathising with the Tibeian cause. But beyond that nothing. The champions of liberty, freedom and justice having lost their capacity to show rigeous indignation towards blatant violations of human rights, genocide and tyranny, their apathy and passivity, in full play. The sheer magnitude of the tragedy of Tibet defies descriptions. In retrospect we realise that the blunders of the then Prime Minister, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, the then Defence Minister VK Krishna Menon and of-course the architect of our defeat Lt Gen BM Kaul, whose over ambition to become the next Army Chief led to this humiliation of 1962 against the Chinese onslaught, a black spot that was to haunt us for years and years to come. Nehru, we realise now went overboard in his effort to seal a permanent peace-pact with Mao Zedong and Zhou Enlai's China not heading to the frequent warnings of Sardar Vallabh Bhai Patel, India's Deputy Prime Minister and Home Minister, sacrificing Tibet in

the process. It is a historical fact that Tibet was never a part of China, though at the height of China's golden era, they did claim sovereignty over Tibet. During British rule over India which lasted a good two hundred years or so, in the Great Game of the nineteenth century, between Britain and Russia to gain influence over Central Assia, primarily Afghanistan, Persia and Tibet, the China factor was never of much relevance. It's a recorded fact that in the seventh century Songtsen Gampo established a Tibetan Empire covering a large portion of Western China. Historically Tibet has always been an independent state and a buffer between Russia, British, India and China. In 1914 the Shimla Convention was signed during the British rule of India that delineated boundaries. Howver, after the Long March of the communists lead by Mao Zedong with China emerging as a powerful communist region, Tibet was invaded and annexed in 1950. The greater folly committed by Nehru was not to take the matter of Tibet's invasion, naked aggression and annexation by China to the United Nations but to sign an agreement with China in 1954, recognising Tibet as "Tibet region of China". Ethnic cleansing of Ti-

bet, by China, continues unabated. Tibet's demography is being surreptitiously changed by promoting people from main land China to migrate and settle in Tibet. The suppression of Tibetans and their demand for freedom is being brutally suppressed and put down by the Chinese. The recent clashes of Chinese and Indian troops in Galwan Valley further aggravated relations and the possibility of any dialogue. And the face-off with Pakistan after the Pahalgao massacre of Indian tourist in April this year, leading to India launching Operation Sindoor against Pakistan has brought to the fore the open and undisguised support of China for Pakistan in the operation with their armament, air power and interception platforms. We are now at a crucial stage of history. Are we still going to be ambient and passive about the Tibet issue, or are we, if we pride ourselves to be the third powerful global power, going to forcefully stand up for the Tibetan cause, its right to freedom and return to their motherland. China has turned into an international bully. Sooner or later it has to be confronted. Its settlements across Arunachal Pradesh and Bhutan threaten the peace process. There are reports that the

Chinese, as part of their covert operations have breached the Dalai Lama's inner-circle, with the intention of subverting the succession procedure, post the Dalai Lama's passing away. Dharamshala, the abode of the Dalai Lama is under constant surveillance of the Chinese regime and it's alleged that money is flowing freely into the willing hands of Chinese-Tibetans, not immune from temptation and the lure of wealth. Amidst rising speculation, much rhetoric and concealed passion, the debate rages. Are we on the brink of the third World War! Perhaps. Russia and Uzbekistan. Israel and Iran. China and Taiwan. India and Pakistan. USA and China, The master-puppeteers. Donald Trump and Xi Jinping! In every country, since time-immemorial, there have been emperors and kings, dictators and despots, heads of ruthless and repressive regimes who have let loose brutality, terror, oppression and genocide on innocent unsuspecting and peace loving people. History is replete with such examples and history is also witness to the ultimate downfall of such symbols of tyranny and evil, whether it be a Hitler, a Stalin, a Idi Amin or a Saddam Hussein. China too will implode from within. One day. Some

day! For after all, the Soviet Union, the only other Super Power besides America, did finally collapse and disintegrate. On the global stage the cycle of emergence and collapse of nations and power blocks continues. Such is the law of nature. The fluidity of the present scenario also suggests that a great churning is taking place. Tiananmen massacre took place in 1989. The terror of Tiananmen is being re-invented time and time again in Tibet and Xinjiang. Yet the freedom loving democracies of the world watch helplessly the Tibetan tragedy being played out day after day, month after month, year after year and now it's 75 years. His Holiness The Dalai Lama is touching ninety. On the 6th of July this year we celebrate his Ninetieth birthday. 'One day we will return to our homeland' says the Dalai Lama, never tiring of repeating it. Holding out Hope. Never letting go of the dream. FREE TIBET! Major Vijai Singh Mankotia, Former Minister, Tourism, Civil Aviation & Law, Himachal Pradesh, War Veteran, 1962 Sino-Indian War, 1965, 1971, Indo-Pak Wars; Sword Of Honour & Gold Medal, Ima Dehradun (June 1962); Honoured By Chief Of The Army Staff (Nov' 2024); Veteran Achiever Medallion

The Era of Queues

FROWNING PROHIBITED

JAS KOHLI



Many senior citizens have nostalgia pre-loaded into their vocal apparatus- they love to wax eloquent about the times when they were looking up to their lives and not looking down upon them. A few days ago, I too happened to go down the memory lane. After getting correction of the home electricity bill in the electricity board office, I had to deposit some amount at the counter in the same building. But the job was as easy as saying one two three. In fact, it was an anti-climax because there was no waiting. I remembered the times when there were long queues at the same place since there was no other modality of paying bills (The inventors of internet and digital payments were dreamers in those days and became movers and shakers later on). Often, so much time was spent in depositing a bill that by the time they finished the task, some persons noticed increase in the number of grey hairs. The queues helped develop patience and docility in the population which in turn prevented riots and upheavals.

If the employee at the counter went for a break just when the turn arrived, one felt like banging one's head on the counter. Musclemen honed their intimidatory techniques by breaking the queue and then bullying those who tried to protest. Situation at the railway stations was no better- the queues could be longer than the length of the trains. Often, by the time one was able to buy the ticket, the train had already left. If there was a breakdown in the electricity supply, one could ring up the complaint number via the landline phone. Despite praying for it be answered, it used to be

If there was a breakdown in the electricity supply, one could ring up the complaint number via the landline phone. Despite praying for it be answered, it used to be non-responsive most of the times.

non-responsive most of the times. In that case, one had to do another project- go to the electricity board office to look for the lineman on duty, who had a predilection for the game of hide and seek. In those days, the slowest moving object on earth was 'the file' in an Indian office. Sometimes, it would move only a few inches in a year. In business families, having two sons was pragmatic- because one was occupied in making endless rounds of banks and government

offices. During the licence permit quota raj, many manufacturers enjoyed monopoly for decades. Only two models of cars were available. But these low tech, mildly aerodynamic, breakdown prone vehicles could only be purchased after a waiting period of five years or more after the booking. I remember the comment about these in the 'World Car' magazine- Cars manufactured in India do get upgraded every few years, by alteration of the front bumper! Those who were at the helm of affairs in Door-darshan, suffered from the extreme form of inertia- for years and years, educational programs and insipid serials were telecast at prime time. So, people had no choice but to bring VCP (Video Cassette Player) on rent along with three or four movie cassettes. If all family members had red eyes, it was unlikely to be due to conjunctivitis. Most

likely, they would have binge watched movies on VCP. The youngsters in those times used to opine that only a revolution could save the country. Then, two revolutions happened without the firing of a single bullet. The liberalization of 1991 unshackled the economy while digitalization simplified the tedious tasks. *Though life isn't perfect even nowadays, it has never been better. So, count your blessings rather than the shortcomings in yourself or in the system!*

GLOBAL EDUCATION SUMMIT 2025

A Heart to Heart for the Divyang

OPINION
PRIYA S. TANDON



Are Education and *Vidya*, synonymous? Education or *Shiksha*, imparted in schools through certified certification, but may or may not lead to learning. *Vidya* refers to knowledge and wisdom. It nurtures the intellect and the soul. Imparting and imbibing *Vidya*, ensures learning. A mother knows when her child is hungry, sleepy, tired ...because she is connected. A father, while communicating with his child, either squats to the child's level or lifts the child up in his arms. Because for effective communication, there has to be eye-to-eye and heart-to-heart contact. Children express themselves best, to their parents. But after infancy, inevitably they need to move on to the schools. Schools therefore, need to be cognisant of different kinds of learners and different methodologies of teaching. Different children, learn in different ways and at different paces. Each one of us is born different in looks, colour, height, blood group etc. So too, each one of us is differently wired, in the brain. This is called Neurodiversity,

and it is nature's norm. Only a handful of people understand that specially-abled children or *Divyang*, are not able to learn and understand by conventional methods of teaching. The norm has been to send them to special schools. But this isolates them, from mainstream life. They miss out on a lot and often end up as social outcasts. The New Education Policy - NEP 2020, recognises that all schools need to be 'inclusive'. This means that school premises, curriculum, teachers and peer mindsets should be adapted and open towards including all kinds of learners. I work as a volunteer with the Sri Sathya Sai Vidya Vahini (SSSVV). Sri Sathya Sai Vidya Vahini (SSSVV) is a volunteer driven, digital initiative of the Sri Sathya Sai Central Trust focusing on providing Integral Education to rural schools. The Ministry of Education, invited Sri Sathya Sai Vidya Vahini to create content, fit for inclusive classrooms. We started creating such content in January, 2022. The content created by the volunteers of SSSVV is uploaded to the Prime Minister's DIKSHA Portal. The Global Education Summit -2025 was held in Prasanthi Nilayam, Puttaparthi, Andhra Pradesh, under the spiritual aegis of Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba, from June 25-27, 2025, at the Sai Hira Global Convention Centre. This summit was held to brainstorm on, 'Neurodi-

versity to Neuroplasticity'. Neurodiversity, recognises neurological differences as natural variations of the human brain; being not deficits. Neuroplasticity, enunciates that the brain is capable of reorganizing itself and forming added neural connections all through life. A galaxy of experts from the field of education both traditional and allied, attended the conclave. Why should super-intelligent children be labelled as nerds, or the slow ones as unintelligent, or difficult? All children/learners should be accepted as they are, and taught as they need to be taught. If they can't learn how you teach; just teach them how they will learn! In conditions like autism, ADHD, ASD etc. the neurons in the brain become lethargic and new dendrites do not grow. New neural connections are not formed. But if the brain is exposed to challenges and stimulating experiences, the neurons in the brain, begin to sprout new dendrites. Music and dance are ace methods for helping children who are specially-abled, to learn as well as express themselves. One expert, presented brain stimulating exercises titled, 'Flex your Cortex'. To my delight, ancient Indian wisdom and games were used. I had seen people, stand in front of the temple deity, cross-hold their ears and do mini-squats. I always thought it was a way of asking for forgiveness. In our parents' generation, this was also a punishment given to school children, for being inattentive or even hyper. They called it *Muruga Bann*. Well! As per the expert, the simple exercise opens up the cerebral cortex! Our ancient wisdom was so scientific! I learnt that the brain is 25% developed at birth, 70% by the first birthday and 85%

by the third birthday of the child. By age five, the brain is 92% developed. For the brain to develop, the child needs to be exposed to learning experiences with people and things, nature, situations, circumstances, etc. Traditional Indian wisdom encourages mothers to talk to their unborn foetus. Mothers are encouraged to talk to and caress their babies especially on their head, while breastfeeding them. This stimulates the brain. Love and care are the greatest emotions that build the emotional well-being of a child. A child who is cared for at home often has better neural connections. Playgrounds created at home do not serve the purpose that community playgrounds do. It is in a playground that the child learns to interact with children from other communities, ages, gender, colour, strata of society, etc. The interactions with different kinds of children, stimulates the neurons of the brain to think, process and understand. This not only promotes physical growth by running, playing on swings, slides, merry-go-rounds, etc., it stimulates the emotional and mental growth of a child. This makes me think of the ancient wisdom to play and do yoga in the outdoors. Games like *langri taang, kabaddi, hopscotch, gilli-danda, pallanguzbi* ... were about being in the community and making social interactions. Children were made to participate in cultural events, prayers, bhajans, dances, Ram-leelas, Janmasthmi celebrations ... the modern child thinks these are just for the oldies. The minds of the children need to be fuelled always. Prayer and meditation can teach a child to focus on the inner self. If our thoughts are focussed, our mental-health integrates. If

our thoughts are flying in all directions, our mental-health dis-integrates. Our very own Indian Panchatantra stories are fables, of animals having good and bad habits. They were written at the behest of King Amaraski, for the benefit of his three sons, who were not interested in studying and would not respond to regular methodologies of teaching. The king asked a scholar Vishnu Sharma, to devise a method to teach morals, goodness and governing skills to his sons. The author, created a collection of five volumes known as Panchatantra. The stories therein are suffused with values and teachings on multifarious topics. This would be the first time content was created for inclusive education! Parents are the first teachers of the child. Teachers often refer to their students as 'our children'. So, teachers are the second parents. If both sets of teachers and parents work together, then the sky is the limit for the children! Parents and teachers need to upskill themselves to learn to teach, each learner the way he/she, wants/needs to learn. Our children are our future. Let's give them our best. When Einstein and Newton, could excel, despite being autistic, surely anyone can! The Global Education Summit 2025, brought together many intelligent minds. It was overwhelming to see the good work many empathic souls are doing in this field. New ideas and practices were presented. But the ancient truths about showering children with tender loving care, were at the heart of everything. As Sri Sathya Sai Baba said, "Love all, Serve all. Help Ever, Hurt Never!" This is the way forward for parents, teachers and everyone else!



Arjun Chaudhary with his team



Education Minister Harjot Singh Bains along with students who brought their ideas into reality

TARUNI GANDHI
CHANDIGARH

In a powerful story of dreams, determination, and innovation rising from humble beginnings, government school students from across Punjab are set to showcase their entrepreneurial creations at the prestigious Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Ropar on July 5. This isn't a typical school exhibition. It's a live demonstration of what happens when the right policy meets raw talent and passion.

Nearly 50 teams of government school students — many from families of daily wage labourers and marginal backgrounds — will pitch their startups before a gathering of industrialists, potential investors, and mentors. The event is part of the Punjab Government's ambitious 'Business Blaster Young Entrepreneur' programme, which has become a launchpad for young innovators in the state's public education system.

A SEED OF CHANGE

Launched in 2022 as a pilot project, the Business Blaster scheme was introduced to instil entrepreneurial thinking in school students, going beyond textbook education. Initially rolled out in just 32 government senior secondary schools across 9 districts, the programme reached 11,041 students in its first year. Encouraged by the overwhelming response, the Punjab School Education Department expanded the initiative state-wide.

In the 2024-25 academic session, the programme has now touched 1,920 government schools and engaged over 1.38 lakh Class 12 students, of whom 52,050 have been shortlisted based on their project ideas, feasibility, and innovation. Each selected student received ₹2,000 as seed funding to

TDG
EXPLAINER

kick-start their business idea.

A MINISTER'S VISION

"This programme is not just about business — it's about confidence, about a mindset shift," said Punjab Education Minister Harjot Singh Bains, speaking ahead of the IIT Ropar event. "We are seeing children of masons, farm labourers, and migrant workers dreaming of becoming job creators, not job seekers. That is the real revolution."

Bains added that 7,500 teams had been selected through a rigorous evaluation process that involved concept pitches, product demonstrations, and community feedback.

To ensure these student ventures are adequately supported, the Education Department has allocated ₹10.40 crore this year, with ₹9.38 crore already disbursed to 46,910 students. The remaining amount is under process.

STORIES OF INNOVATION: FROM RAILWAYS TO REALITY

Among the many projects that will be showcased at IIT Ropar is Protect Plus — a women's safety device developed by a team of eight boys from GSSS Boys School in Ferozepur, led by Manthan, a Class 12 student. The seed for this innovation was sown back in 2020, when Manthan, then just a schoolboy, was travelling in a train and saw a man harassing a female passenger. The incident left him disturbed and helpless. That moment etched in his memory turned into a mission.

With ₹16,000 in funding from the Business Blaster

scheme, Manthan and his teammates — Gurkirat Singh, Amandeep Singh, Sukhman Singh, Arshdeep Singh, Kamaldeep Singh, and Gurmeet Singh — designed a multi-utility safety stick branded as Protect Plus, which includes a provision to deliver an electric shock to a predator. This device is intended to empower women in vulnerable situations and act as a deterrent against harassment. Their product is more than a symbolic gesture — it's a real, functional safety tool designed with purpose, empathy, and usability in mind.

"We didn't just want to make something to show. We wanted to create something that could protect someone's life," said Manthan.

WHEELS OF CHANGE: AN ELECTRIC DREAM

Then there's Arjun Chaudhary, a 12th pass-out from Lamini Government School in Pathankot, who scored 89% in Vocational Electrical. His parents work as daily wage labourers, and until recently, Arjun never imagined he could dream of starting a business. But with the seed money and motivation provided by the Business Blaster programme, Arjun and his team transformed a simple cycle into a fully functional e-cycle.

The e-cycle, which features a battery, motor, controller, LED lights, and a range of up to 70 km at a speed of 25 km/hr, is not just a prototype. With a 5-year battery life and a 10-year motor guarantee, it is a serious product. Already, the team has received 15

Punjab's Business Blaster programme empowers government school students with seed funding and mentorship to launch startups. From safety devices to e-cycles and herbal soaps, young innovators are solving real problems. The initiative fosters entrepreneurship, confidence, and financial literacy, transforming lives across marginalized communities.

EMPOWERED BY BUSINESS BLASTER, PUNJAB GOVT SCHOOL STUDENTS REWRITE THEIR DESTINY

confirmed orders for more such cycles — turning a school project into a budding business.

"I always thought only rich people can start companies," Arjun told *The Daily Guardian*. "But when the government trusted us with even ₹2,000, we realised someone believes in us. That belief made the real difference."



Arjun Chaudhary, Pathankot Lamini Govt School created E Cycle

SWEET SUCCESS: FROM FOX NUTS TO FRAGRANCES

Gagandeep Kaur and her team decided to take a different route. They created healthy alternatives to commercial chocolates, crafting fox nut chocolates and khoya chocolates that not only taste good but promote health and local ingredients.

"We want to give people something they can enjoy

without guilt," said Gagandeep, who feels their business also supports farmers indirectly by using locally-sourced materials.

HERBAL SOAPS WITH ORGANIC FRAGRANCES

Then there's Jhanvi Dhami, an 18-year-old student from School of Eminence, Amlah, who launched her

that heal, not harm."

According to officials from the Punjab Education Department, the Business Blaster initiative is not about producing the next unicorn startup overnight. Instead, it is about building entrepreneurial thinking, problem-solving skills,

and self-confidence in young students.

"These students learn real-world lessons — from budgeting, product development, marketing to teamwork and public speaking," said a senior officer involved in programme implementation. "This learning is price-

less, especially for children who never imagined they could take such bold steps."

Another key outcome is financial literacy. Students manage their seed money, track profits and losses, and learn reinvestment principles — often for the first time in their lives.

The event at IIT Ropar is expected to bring industry stakeholders, startup mentors, and angel investors into direct contact with these young innovators. "If even a few products catch the eye of industry leaders, we'll see students being incubated, mentored, and taken forward — and that's exactly what we aim for," Bains added.

The Punjab government is also considering institutionalising the Business Blaster programme by creating incubation spaces in selected government schools, partnering with higher education institutions, and creating a state-backed fund for student entrepreneurship.

Meanwhile, the excitement among the students is palpable. From designing promotional posters to rehearsing their product pitches, the participants are treating the IIT event as a real business opportunity, not just an academic exercise.

"I used to think only people in Delhi or Bengaluru could do startups," said Manthan. "But now I know — even a boy from Ferozepur, who once just watched helplessly, can build something that matters."



Gagandeep Kaur, with her team and brand BB choco Dreams



Protect Plus stick by Manthan and his team members from GSSS boys Ferozepur



Jhanvi Dhami, school of eminence amlah, created Herbal Soaps

MINDSET SHIFT
● Empowering Students: Punjab's <i>Business Blaster Young Entrepreneur</i> programme is transforming government school students into budding entrepreneurs by nurturing innovation and self-belief.
● Massive Participation: From just 32 schools in 2022, the programme now spans 1,920 schools, engaging over 1.38 lakh Class 12 students across Punjab.
● Seed Funding Support: Each selected student received Rs 2,000 to develop their startup idea. This year, Rs 9.38 crore has already been disbursed to over 46,000 students.
● Pitch at IIT Ropar: Nearly 50 student-led startup teams will pitch live at IIT Ropar on July 5 to industrialists, investors, and mentors — a real opportunity beyond the classroom.
● Protect Plus Innovation: A team from Ferozepur designed a women's safety stick that can deliver an electric shock to deter attackers, inspired by a disturbing real-life incident.
● Electric Cycle Venture: Arjun Chaudhary, son of daily wage labourers, built a working e-cycle with a 70 km range and has already received 15 orders.
● Healthy Chocolates Startup: Gagandeep Kaur's team created fox nut and khoya chocolates, offering healthy, local alternatives to mass-market treats.
● Herbal Heaven Soaps: Jhanvi Dhami developed handmade soaps using neem, rose, aloe vera, and turmeric. Over 160 units have been sold so far.
● Real-World Learning: Students gain hands-on experience in budgeting, product design, marketing, teamwork, and public speaking — vital entrepreneurial skills.
● Financial Literacy: Managing seed funds, tracking profits and reinvestments gives students, often first-generation learners, a practical grasp of money management.
● Policy with Purpose: Education Minister Harjot Singh Bains highlights the programme's aim — shifting mindsets from job-seeking to job-creating, especially for students from marginalised backgrounds.
● Future Vision: The Punjab government plans to institutionalise the initiative through school-based incubation hubs, higher education partnerships, and a dedicated entrepreneurship fund.

DR. JITENDRA KUMAR SONI: FULFILLING THE VISION OF CHIEF MINISTER BHAJAN LAL SHARMA



NARENDRA SINGH SHEKHAWAT

New standards of governance are being set in Rajasthan under the dynamic leadership of Chief Minister Bhajan Lal Sharma. His vision of Antyodaya—uplifting the last person in the line—is being realized in Jaipur through the committed leadership of District Collector Dr. Jitendra Kumar Soni. With his administrative innovation, commitment to transparency, and inclusive development focus, Dr. Soni has become a symbol of good governance in the capital city.

COLLECTOR OF THE COMMON PEOPLE

Known for his sensitivity, impartiality, and foresight, Dr. Jitendra Kumar Soni has earned the reputation of being the “Collector of the Common People.” He has played a pivotal role in implementing state government schemes effectively, ensuring their impact reaches every section of society. His approach integrates administration with education, social justice, and public participation, reflecting a comprehensive and sustainable development model.

HONORED WITH PROF. PC MAHALANOBIS

AWARD

Dr. Soni was recently honored by Chief Minister Bhajan Lal Sharma with the Prof. PC Mahalanobis Award for his exemplary use of statistical tools in economic planning, monitoring, and execution of public welfare schemes. This recognition at the 19th State Level Statistics Day function highlights his analytical approach to governance.

Sustainable Development Goals Index 2024 Released

Under Dr. Soni's leadership, Jaipur became the first district in Rajasthan to release a District Level Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) Index in 2024. This initiative encourages healthy competition among Panchayat Samitis for holistic development. Additionally, the district pioneered the Birth, Death, and Marriage Registration Guide, simplifying legal procedures for the public.

ENHANCING PUBLIC AWARENESS THROUGH BOOKLETS AND PORTALS

To ensure wider dissemination of information, a booklet on the district scenario and flagship government schemes was published, facilitating department-wise scheme reviews. A help desk under the Jan Aadhar Scheme is also resolving public grievances promptly, demonstrating responsive governance.

ANTYODAYA SAMBAL PAKHWADA: REACHING THE LAST MILE

In alignment with CM Sharma's vision, Pandit Deendayal Upadhyay An-



Dr. Soni is personally overseeing these camps, where over 30 lakh works across 63 categories were completed by 16 departments in 350 camps by July 2, 2025.

tyodaya Sambal Pakhwada camps have been effectively organized across Jaipur. Dr. Soni is personally overseeing these camps, where over 30 lakh works across 63 categories were completed by 16 departments in 350 camps by July 2, 2025. These camps have become synonymous with relief and empowerment for marginalized communities.

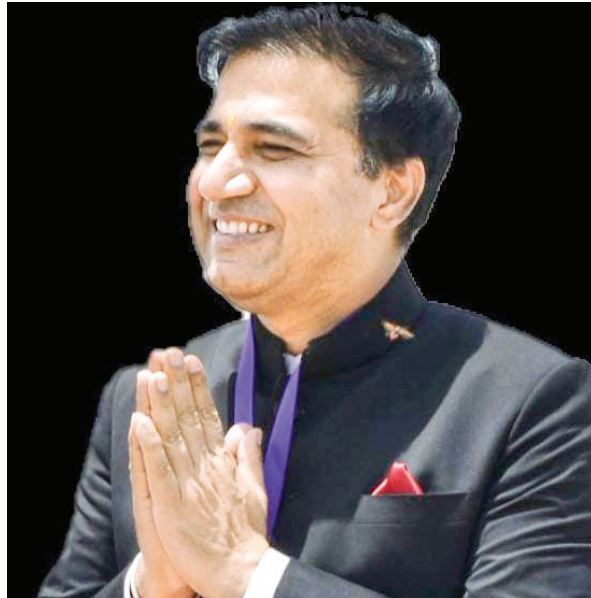
RAASTA KHOLO ABHIYAN: CONNECTING COMMUNITIES

One of the most impactful initiatives under Dr. Soni's leadership is the “Raasta Kholo Abhiyan,” launched on November 15, 2025. Each tehsil opens three previously closed roads weekly with local consensus. In just eight months, over 1,300 roads were opened in Jaipur, bene-

fitting thousands of villagers. Encouraged by this success, the state government has expanded the campaign statewide. Additionally, newly opened roads are being developed into gravel and CC roads for better connectivity.

LADESAR ABHIYAN: FIGHTING MALNUTRITION

To tackle malnutrition



among children, the Jaipur administration, led by Dr. Soni, initiated the “Ladesar Abhiyan.” Ladesar kits—containing vital nutrients—are distributed monthly for three months to 5,300 malnourished and 883 severely malnourished children identified at Anganwadi centers. Health and nutritional status is regularly monitored, making this campaign a milestone in improving child health.

PANCH GAURAV YOJANA: SHOWCASING JAIPUR'S PRIDE

Dr. Soni has taken a unique approach to showcase Jaipur's identity and achievements under the Panch Gaurav Yojana. Jaipur published the first “Panch Gaurav” booklet in Rajasthan, highlighting five pride areas. Under “One District One Sport – Kabaddi,” synthetic mat grounds are being built in all blocks and villages. Under “One District One Product – Amla,” and “One

District One Vegetable – Lasoda,” plantation planning is in its final stages. Additionally, workshops are promoting “One District One Product – Ratnabhushan” to support local industries.

DRUG-FREE JAIPUR: A MODEL FOR YOUTH EMPOWERMENT

Recognizing the menace of drug abuse, Dr. Soni launched the “Drug-Free Jaipur Campaign” under the Saksham Jaipur initiative. A dedicated website allows citizens to take an e-oath, with a goal of 21 lakh pledges. This innovative model of community engagement is gaining widespread public support, emphasizing the administration's commitment to youth welfare.

TRANSPARENT AND PARTICIPATORY GOVERNANCE

Dr. Soni's governance model is rooted in public participation. Whether it's resolving complaints through Jan Aadhar helpdesks, simpli-

fying legal registrations, or opening roads with community consensus, his focus remains on inclusive development. His ability to merge data analysis with grassroots implementation sets him apart as an administrator.

RECOGNIZED FOR LEADERSHIP AND VISION

The multifaceted recognition Jaipur is receiving under Dr. Soni's leadership is not limited to awards but reflects a deep structural transformation. His initiatives have created templates now being adopted across Rajasthan. With education, health, nutrition, rural infrastructure, and digital empowerment as his core focus areas, Jaipur is rapidly transforming into a model district.

A PIONEER OF CHANGE IN MODERN GOVERNANCE

District Collector Dr. Jitendra Kumar Soni has emerged as a symbol of modern, inclusive, and responsive governance in Rajasthan. Through his dedication and far-sightedness, he is ensuring that the vision of Chief Minister Bhajan Lal Sharma is realized in every household of Jaipur. His administrative style, focused on transparency, innovation, and human-centric development, has turned Jaipur into a beacon of progress and a source of inspiration for administrators across the country.

The author is working as Assistant Public Relations Officer in the Department of Information and Public Relations.

India's Data Law: A privacy promise or surveillance tool?



RITIKA GOSWAMI

In an era where data is fast becoming the new oil, the underlying tension between state surveillance and individual privacy is getting increasingly complicated. With the introduction of the Digital Personal Data Protection Act, 2023 (DPDPA), India took a huge leap towards codifying a legal framework to govern data processing and safeguard the digital rights of Indian citizens. Yet, numerous legal experts, privacy rights defenders, and human rights organizations have posed an uncomfortable but necessary question—does this law go far enough in safeguarding citizens from the surveillance powers of the State?

THE PROMISE OF THE DPDPA

The Digital Personal Data Protection Act, 2023 was conceived of as the end of a very long road that started in earnest after the Supreme Court's historic judgment in Justice K.S. Puttaswamy v. Union of India (2017), which recognized privacy as a fundamental right under Article 21 of the Constitution. In that ruling, the Court not only recognized the requirement for data protection law but also emphasized the fact

that any interference with privacy must satisfy the tests of legality, necessity, and proportionality.

The DPDPA brings in key concepts of Data Fiduciaries, Data Principals, Consent Managers, and enacts obligations for legal data processing. It provides certain rights to the individual—such as the right of access to information, correction, and erasure of personal data—and assures penalties for breaches. A Data Protection Board is instituted to ensure compliance and impose duties.

On the face of it, these provisions look progressive and in line with international data protection standards. The actual problem lies in what the law decides to exclude, particularly the surveillance by the government.

GOVERNMENT EXEMPTIONS: THE ELEPHANT IN THE ROOM

The most criticised section of the DPDPA is Clause 17(2), which empowers the Central Government to exempt any government agency from the provisions of the Act, such as notice requirements, purposes limitation, and consent exemptions, in the interest of sovereignty, security of the state, public order, or friendly relations with foreign states.

This exemption provision is written in sweeping and vague terms, basically granting a carte blanche to the executive to override fundamental privacy protections. The law makes no requirement for any judicial or parliamentary



input prior to surveillance or data gathering under such exemptions.

On the other hand, privacy as a right under the Constitution cannot be derogated by mere executive order. The Supreme Court, in the Puttaswamy verdict, established that any invasion must be supported by law, must have a legitimate objective, and must be proportionate in character. The exception clause fulfills none of these requirements—

it is not specific, does not give independent consideration, and does not provide any effective remedy to affected persons.

THE SURVEILLANCE LANDSCAPE IN INDIA: A LEGAL VACUUM

India lacks a surveillance law that is comprehensive in scope. Government surveillance is instead being done under archaic legislation such as the Indian Telegraph Act, 1885 and Section 69 of the Information Technology

Act, 2000. Both these acts fail to provide prior judicial sanction or procedures for interception and monitoring of communications in a transparent manner. In reality, authorisation of surveillance is carried out internally within the executive, which raises grave concerns regarding absence of accountability and abuse of power.

The scandalous Pegasus spyware revelations in 2021, which implicated the targeting of journalists,

activists, opposition figures and even constitutional powers, showed how surveillance without any checks could be used as a weapon against opposition. Refusal by the government to deny or confirm the use of Pegasus, on grounds of national security, merely provided further fuel to public suspicion.

The lack of reference to surveillance reform under the DPDPA, given the Supreme Court's focus on proportionality, stands as a conspicuous omission which cannot be overlooked.

THE ROLE AND INDEPENDENCE OF THE DATA PROTECTION BOARD

The other important weakness of the Act is the composition and operation of the Data Protection Board of India. While introduced as a regulator, the Board is not autonomous—its members, including the Chairperson, are to be appointed by the Central Government, and it is subject to its administrative control.

This puts major doubts on the impartiality of action of the Board in taking recourse against government departments or public sector undertakings. For example, if a citizen's information is misused or gathered surreptitiously by a State agency in the name of “public interest,” there is no defined mechanism of grievance redressal or constitutional remedy available within the scheme of this legislation.

GLOBAL COMPARISONS: WHERE INDIA STUMBLES

The EU's General Data Pro-

tection Regulation (GDPR) is generally accepted as the data protection gold standard. It not only gives robust individual rights and consent rules, but also forbids processing of personal data by public authorities unless it passes strict necessity and proportionality tests. Additionally, state surveillance has to be authorized by the judiciary and independent review, and citizens can turn to the European Court of Human Rights for violations.

In the US, even without a national data protection statute, a number of surveillance programs such as those under the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act (FISA) are governed by specialized courts and have been publicly debated and litigated.

Even the Protection of Personal Information Act (POPIA) of South Africa imposes more stringent controls on access to data by the government than the Indian model, which appears to completely tip the balance in the direction of the executive.

DIGITAL GOVERNANCE AND DIGITAL CONTROL

India's dreams of turning into a digital economy—through initiatives such as Aadhaar, DigiLocker, ONDC, and National Digital Health Mission—are laudable. But in a democratic country like ours, digital governance cannot turn into digital control. Citizens should not be made to compromise between efficiency and freedom.

The privacy-security debate is not a zero-sum game. It is possible—and

imperative—to create laws that empower the state to advance national interests without diminishing the protection of individuals from arbitrary intrusion. Without such equilibrium, trust in digital systems breaks down and people become ever more vulnerable to abuse by the State as well as by private entities.

THE WAY FORWARD

For India to actually come in line with constitutional morality and global best practices, the following reforms are immediately necessary:

1. Surveillance Reform Law: An independent, overarching legislation that governs central and state agency surveillance, with inbuilt checks and balances, judicial sanction, and accountability regimes.

2. Independent Data Regulator: The Data Protection Board needs to be established as an autonomous body, with appointments through open selection process, and separate funding and reporting structures.

3. Right to Remedy: The people should be provided with the right to be informed when their data has been accessed by public authorities, with an open avenue for obtaining judicial redress. Privacy is not merely a technological or legal issue—it is a democratic value. To truly honour the Puttaswamy judgment and the Constitution's promise of liberty and dignity, India must reimagine its data protection law not as a tool of regulation alone, but as a guardian of fundamental rights in the digital age.

EU URGED TO DELAY AI ACT ENFORCEMENT AMID INDUSTRY CONCERNS

The EU weighs current delay of the AI Act, balancing clarity, risks, and international regulatory influence.

With less than one month to go before the first tranche of obligations under the EU's Artificial Intelligence Act (AI Act) applies to general-purpose AI (GPAI) models—a milestone scheduled for 2 August 2025—the European Commission finds itself at the center of a heated debate, receiving mounting pressure from some of the world's largest technology companies and European industry leaders to pause or delay its phased implementation, a request that now sits in tension with the bloc's broader ambition to assert global leadership in regulating artificial intelligence through robust risk-based frameworks.

THE EU'S PHASED ROLLOUT



AI Artificial intelligence words, miniature of robot and EU flag are seen in this illustration taken December 21, 2023. File Photo

The AI Act, which formally entered into force on 1 August 2024, was deliberately structured to roll out in successive waves over a three-year period to give companies and member states time to adapt. The earliest provisions—prohibitions on unacceptable AI use—took effect in February 2025, while the next wave of obligations targeting GPAI models, such as foundational models developed by Google, OpenAI, Mistral, and others, is scheduled for 2 August 2025, requiring compliance in critical areas such as transparency, technical documentation, copyright adherence, bias and toxicity testing, robustness evaluations, and energy usage reporting. The subsequent wave, targeting high-risk and systemically impactful models, will arrive in August 2026, followed by further measures in August 2027, thereby establishing a clear but ambitious timeline designed to balance regulatory rigor with pragmatic deployment.

DEMAND FOR CLOCKSTOP

In recent weeks, U.S. technology giants including Alphabet (Google) and Meta Platforms, alongside European incumbents such as Mistral and ASML, and a coalition of 45 European-headquartered firms—among them Airbus, BNP Paribas, Philips, Carrefour, Lufthansa, and Siemens—have issued an open letter to the European Commission requesting a sweeping two-year "clockstop" on the GPAI obligations scheduled for next month, urging the Commission to use its legislative authority to pause enforcement until the AI Code of Practice, accompanying standards, and compliance frameworks are fully finalized and disseminated. These companies argue that

the convergence of intricate regulatory obligations—covering transparency, model evaluations, and risk mitigation—combined with legal uncertainties about training data, copyright, and energy efficiency, threaten to overload internal compliance teams, create uneven enforcement across member states, raise compliance costs, and ultimately erode Europe's competitiveness at a time when the U.S. and China continue to grow and

that without a delay and simplification, "Europe's AI ambitions [are] at risk" and innovation will be stifled.

This appeals echoes various concerns previously aired over the past year—including statements from Meta's public policy director, Chris Yiu, who noted that EU regulations have delayed deployment of novel products, and Google DeepMind's Dorothy Chou, who emphasized that the AI Act's conception predated breakthrough products like ChatGPT and therefore risks being outdated or mismatched to current practices.

A Contradictory Chorus Support for delaying enforcement has also arisen from political quarters in member states, with Sweden's Prime Minister Ulf Kristersson explicitly calling the rules "confusing" and urging a pause, and Poland's Deputy Minister advocating for alignment of legal deadlines with compliance readiness. Tech lobbying association CCIA Europe has urged a stop-the-clock intervention, emphasizing that developers and employers require legal certainty before adherence

key frameworks not be fully available, while France, Germany, and Italy have reportedly signaled openness to self-regulation proposals, though EU institutions remain divided on whether to reinforce or dilute the regulatory framework.

MISSING FOUNDATIONS

One of the principal justifications for the delay request is the ongoing delay to the AI Code of Practice, a non-binding guidance document envisioned as a central tool for derisking compliance uncertainty. Originally expected by 2 May 2025, the Code is now projected by the European AI Board to be released only by end-2025, a six-month delay that leaves companies without official guidance for how to meet obligations. Similarly, harmonised technical standards being drafted by CEN-CENELEC—intended to serve as a presumption of conformity with regulatory requirements—have slipped past their August 2025 target into 2026, depriving companies of clear benchmarks for documenting compliance.

sion has maintained a firm public stance that "there is no stop-the-clock, there is no grace period, there is no pause" (Thomas Regnier), reaffirming that the GPAI obligations will begin on 2 August 2025, followed by high-risk rules in 2026. The Commission argues that bending the schedule risks eroding legal certainty, undermining harmonization, and compromising Europe's reputation as the global standardsetter for trustworthy AI—a role it has assumed alongside GDPR.

Member-State Readiness While the Commission emphasizes regulatory clarity, EU member states face practical readiness issues: half of the 27 nations have yet to designate their national overseers and market surveillance authorities responsible for enforcing the AI Act, as well as identify competent authorities and adopt implementing laws. A May 2025 Euronews review found that countries such as Germany, Italy, Portugal, and Romania are still finalizing their administrative structures. Without these bodies fully constituted, doubts arise over whether meaningful enforcement is practical on deadline day. The EU AI Board, which coordinates across member states, has picked up momentum, but oversight infrastructure remains uneven—further fueling industry concerns that obligations may be enacted in theory but remain unenforced in reality.

A STAFFING DEFICIT

Observers also point to a

severe lack of enforcement capacity at the EU AI Office: Reddit users citing internal leaks report that the office employs as few as 30 dedicated staff, with total numbers at approximately 85, significantly outmatched by the UK's AI Safety Institute, which reportedly has twice as many. This constraint may delay enforcement and reduce the quality of oversight, undermining the Act's credibility. A widely cited Reddit summary states:

"The EU is at risk of lagging in enforcing its groundbreaking AI regulations due to insufficient staffing ... compared to the UK's AI Safety Institute"

THE POLITICAL CALENDAR

As of mid-June, analysts note that any formal delay of GPAI obligations would require swift adoption through the EU's fast-track legislative process, concatenating agreement from the Commission, Council, and Parliament before the Parliament's final plenary week beginning 7 July 2025, with formal adoption by 10 July prior to summer recess. A delay at that point could then retroactively halt the rollout to allow guidance to catch up. Historically, the EU has enacted such clockstops—for example, suspending the application of the Deforestation Regulation and elements of the Corporate Sustainability Reporting Directive—suggesting that, in principle, such actions remain viable if ministers choose.

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deploy at scale. Signatories to the letter characterize the regulations as "unclear, overlapping and increasingly complex," and warn

begins. Summarizing the political posture, EU tech chief Henna Virkkunen indicated willingness to consider delaying obligations should

THE COMMISSION'S POSITION

Despite heightened pressure, the European Commis-

Kyiv suffers devastating drone strike, Poland's embassy section damaged

On a grim Friday night, Kyiv endured the largest drone strike in the history of its ongoing conflict with Russia, marking a significant escalation in Moscow's aerial offensive. The attack resulted in widespread damage across the Ukrainian capital, injuring at least 23 people, with 14 requiring hospitalization, and severely impacting infrastructure, residential areas, and diplomatic premises, including Poland's consulate.

THE SCALE OF THE ATTACK

According to Ukraine's Air Force, Russia launched a massive barrage comprising 539 drones and 11 missiles targeting Kyiv and other regions. Ukraine's air defenses demonstrated remarkable resilience by shooting down 478 of these drones before they could reach their targets. Nevertheless, several drones and missiles managed to evade the defenses, striking critical locations in Kyiv and causing destruction across the city.

Videos circulating on social media captured harrowing scenes of residents fleeing to shelters, emergency services fighting fires under dark skies, and buildings bearing the scars of explosions. Windows and facades of apartment blocks were blown out, with structural damage evident in various neighborhoods. The assault struck six of Kyiv's ten districts, leaving approximately 40 apartment buildings damaged, alongside passenger railway infrastructure, five schools and kindergartens,



An elderly couple crossing a street as smoke rises in the background at a site of a strike following a mass Russian drone and missile attack on Kyiv. Agencies

multiple cafés, and numerous vehicles.

The wide-ranging impact of the attack was visible on both sides of the Dnipro River, the natural artery running through the city, reflecting the breadth and intensity of the strike. In the leafy Holosiivskyi district, falling drone debris ignited a fire in a medical facility, adding to the chaos and strain on emergency responders.

IMPACT ON POLAND'S DIPLOMATIC MISSION

Among the buildings hit was the consular section of the Polish embassy in central Kyiv. Polish officials reported damage to their consulate but confirmed that the staff remained unharmed. The strike on the consulate underscores the increasing risks faced by diplomatic missions in the city amid the intensifying hostilities. Despite the damage, Poland reassured the public that its consular personnel were safe, highlighting the ongoing diplomatic challenges in the warzone.

CIVILIAN DISRUPTION & INFRA DAMAGE

The attack caused severe disruption to Kyiv's transportation network. Ukraine's state-owned railway operator, Ukrzaliznytsia, announced via Telegram that the assault forced the diversion of several passenger trains, resulting in delays and logistical complications for commuters and travelers.

Air raid sirens wailed across Kyiv as residents scrambled to safety, seeking refuge in bunkers and underground metro stations. The city's three million inhabitants faced heightened anxiety as the drone swarm darkened the skies, a reminder of the persistent threat hanging over daily life.

The assault came hours after a high-profile phone conversation between U.S. President Donald Trump and Russian President Vladimir Putin. Trump later stated he made "no progress" toward securing a ceasefire during the talks, illustrating the continued diplomatic stalemate even

as violence escalates on the ground.

INTENSIFYING ATTACKS ON KYIV

This drone strike is part of a broader pattern of intensified Russian air assaults on Kyiv in recent weeks. The city, home to millions, has endured some of the war's deadliest attacks, with the Kremlin increasingly targeting urban centers to destabilize the Ukrainian government and morale.

The deployment of kamikaze drones—unmanned aerial vehicles designed to crash into targets—has become a hallmark of Russia's aerial strategy. These drones are capable of evading traditional defenses and striking with precision, posing a severe challenge to Kyiv's air defense systems.

Despite the heavy barrage, Ukrainian forces have demonstrated effective defense measures, managing to intercept the vast majority of incoming threats.

The resilience of the city's air defenses has limited the

potential casualties and destruction, though the damage from successful strikes remains significant.

Human Cost and Ongoing Threat

The human toll of the attack is sobering. At least 23 individuals sustained injuries, many requiring hospital treatment. Beyond physical harm, the psychological impact on Kyiv's residents is profound, with constant air raid warnings and uncertainty taking a toll on daily life.

Emergency services continue to work under difficult conditions, battling fires and conducting rescue operations amid ongoing threats. The attack on civilian infrastructure—schools, kindergartens, and hospitals—raises concerns about the war's toll on non-combatants and essential services.

A City Under Siege

The largest drone strike Kyiv has faced so far highlights the relentless nature of the conflict and the high stakes involved for both sides. Damage to Poland's consulate amid widespread destruction across the capital symbolizes the war's reach beyond purely military targets, touching diplomatic and civilian spheres alike.

As Kyiv grapples with the aftermath, the resilience of its people and defenders remains on display. However, with no ceasefire in sight and hostilities escalating, the city faces continued threats. The world watches as the Ukrainian capital endures one of its darkest chapters, navigating the brutal realities of modern warfare.

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PM Modi walks tightrope at BRICS: Is India's 'strategic autonomy' under strain

This is to be a BRICS Summit for India like no other in the past, as Prime Minister Narendra Modi readies himself for a diplomatic outreach among the world's emerging economies during the BRICS Summit in Brazil. In Rio de Janeiro, Modi will have to apply his best diplomatic manoeuvres.

The two-day summit begins on July 6 and takes place amid sagging support for India in its immediate neighbourhood, and among traditionally close friends.

A diplomatic policy that pursues the middle path, as well as conveniently named 'strategic autonomy' that prioritises national interest above anything else has resulted in India maintaining a precarious balance among emerging global blocs—one led by the US, and the other being the growing China-Russia axis.

However, there is a growing feeling in diplomatic circles that 'strategic autonomy' may have outlived its utility.

Consequently, India has not offered categorical and unambiguous support, either for traditionally close friends Russia or for Ukraine in the ongoing military conflict between the two.

The strategic positioning was such that India could also not clearly support old friend Iran or major military partner Israel when they fought an intense 12-day-long war.

At the same time, while India is a key member in US-dominated multilateral groupings—like the G20 and the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue (or the 'Quad')—it is also a primary member in the BRICS



Indian PM Modi and Russian President Vladimir Putin at the 2024 BRICS Summit. Agencies

and SCO groupings that have China, Russia, and North Korea, which directly undermines the global

A diplomatic policy that pursues the middle path, as well as conveniently named 'strategic autonomy' that prioritises national interest above anything else has resulted in India maintaining a precarious balance among emerging global blocs—one led by the US, and the other being the growing China-Russia axis.

Iran as members. The obvious ambiguity has landed India in a delicate position.

A dominant share of India's military equipment is of Russian origin, while New Delhi has pursued close military collaboration with the US.

With Russian President Vladimir Putin and Chinese supremo Xi Jinping not in attendance at BRICS, Modi will meet Russian defence minister Sergei Lavrov, where a contentious point would be India's support in a joint Quad declaration that had slammed North Korea and expressed concern about nations closely associating with Pyongyang, such as Russia, China and Iran.

The July 1 joint declaration had said: "We express deep concern about countries that are deepening military cooperation with

non-proliferation regime."

On the other hand, US President Donald Trump has been very critical of BRICS, which has de-dollarisation and multi-polarity as its primary planks.

Notably, the 11-member BRICS has been growing in importance since its setting up in 2009. Its nations now account for about 55 per cent of the world's population and 42 per cent of the world's GDP. It is also increasingly being seen as a voice for the Global South, of which India has been a keen votary.

In his longest foreign jaunt in more than a decade, PM Modi has already visited Ghana, Trinidad and Tobago, and Argentina before his Brazil trip. He will end the five-nation tour with an official visit to Namibia.

● TDGNETWORK

IDF KILLS 20 IN GAZA AS US AWAITS HAMAS REPLY TO TRUCE DEAL

Israel awaits Hamas response to a ceasefire deal as Trump offers peace guarantees; talks may resume if Hamas replies positively.

AGENCIES
WASHINGTON

As Israel awaits Hamas's response on Friday to the latest proposal for a hostage release and ceasefire deal in Gaza, The Times of Israel reported that US President Donald Trump would offer the Palestinian terror group a direct guarantee of his commitment to ending the ongoing war, which began in October 2023.

Israel is believed to be under heavy US pressure to clinch a ceasefire deal ahead of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's visit to Washington for talks with Trump next week.


Sources have indicated in recent days that the sides

had shown flexibility on all issues but remained stuck on the question of ending the war, with Israel insisting that it be able to resume its offensive against Hamas and the terror group demanding that any deal permanently end the fighting, which began with its onslaught in Israel on October 7, 2023.

To bridge the remaining gaps between Israel and Hamas on ending the war, Channel 12 news presented a Hebrew translation of what it described as Trump's likely formulation: Trump will "commit that negotiations over the terms for ending the war will continue even after a temporary ceasefire, and

TO SUM UP

- Deal includes release of 10 hostages and 18 bodies over a 60-day ceasefire.
- Mediators assure fighting won't resume during ongoing negotiations.
- Netanyahu to visit Washington Monday amid US pressure for agreement.
- Hamas says it's consulting with Palestinian factions before submitting formal reply.
- Israeli team ready to head to Doha if Hamas gives positive response.



A view of the site of Thursday's Israeli strike that damaged and destroyed residential buildings, at Shati (Beach) refugee camp, in Gaza City, July 4, 2025. Agencies

that I will do everything in my power to help the parties reach an agreement on the terms of a permanent ceasefire."

According to the un-

sourced Thursday report, Trump's message to Hamas is that if it agrees to the so-called Witkoff framework -- which includes the release of 10 living hostages

in two phases and 18 bodies in three phases over the course of a 60-day ceasefire -- the US will ensure efforts continue to reach a lasting end to the conflict.

UK's skilled worker visa route leaves migrants vulnerable

AGENCIES
LONDON

Britain's Skilled Worker visa route used by overseas professionals to seek employment in the country leaves migrants vulnerable to exploitation by some sponsors, a parliamentary panel warned on Friday.

The House of Commons Public Accounts Committee (PAC), responsible for scrutinising government spending, notes that changes to the visa route, popular with Indian workers over the years, by the Home Office failed to properly consider the risks of non-compliance with rules and exploitation of migrant workers.

In its 'Immigration: Skilled worker visas' report tabled this week, PAC said the route being based on a sponsorship model -- where a migrant's right to remain in the UK is entirely dependent on their employer -- makes migrant workers vulnerable to exploitation.

"There is evidence that applicants have been charged extortionate fees for Skilled Worker visas in their home countries, before they come to the United Kingdom,"



reads the PAC analysis.

"The Skilled Worker visa system is based on a sponsorship model where a migrant's right to remain in the United Kingdom is dependent on their employer. This reliance makes migrant workers vulnerable to exploitation, and there is widespread evidence of workers suffering debt bondage, working excessive hours and exploitative conditions," it reports.

The issue of exploitation has been particularly stark among foreign care workers, many of whom accessed these visas when the Skilled Worker route was expanded in response to the COVID pandemic in 2022.

PAC concludes that sufficient action was not taken to prevent exploitation in applicants' home countries and identify bogus agents overseas who charge applicants unnecessary fees or

claim to be able to find them work in the UK.

"Government moved swiftly to open up the visa system to help the social care system cope during the pandemic... Our report finds that this speed came at a painfully high cost -- to the safety of workers from the depredations of labour market abuses, and the integrity of the system from people not following the rules," said PAC Chair Sir Geoffrey Clifton-Brown.

"There has long been mounting evidence of serious issues with the system, laid bare once again in our inquiry. And yet basic information, such as how many people on Skilled Worker visas have been modern slavery victims, and whether people leave the UK after their visas expire, seems to still not have been gathered by the government," he said.

PM Modi conferred with Trinidad and Tobago's highest civilian honour

AGENCIES
PORT OF SPAIN

Prime Minister Narendra Modi was on Friday conferred with "The Order of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago", becoming the first foreign leader to receive the Caribbean country's highest civilian honour.

This is the 25th international honour bestowed upon PM Modi by a country.

In a special ceremony at the President's House, President Christine Carla Kangaloo conferred upon Prime Minister Modi the highest national award of Trinidad & Tobago for his statesmanship, for championing the priorities of the Global South and for his exceptional contribution to strengthening the relationship between the two countries.



Modi, who is on a two-day visit to the Caribbean nation, expressed his gratitude to the government and the people for being honoured with the highest national award.

'Russia won't accept Ukraine deal without security guarantees'

AGENCIES
MOSCOW

Any resolution to the Ukraine conflict must comprehensively address Russia's security concerns, Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov has said at a joint press conference with his Saudi counterpart, Prince Faisal bin Farhan Al Saud, RT reported.

Russia's core demands include a guarantee that Ukraine will not join NATO, demilitarization of the country, international recognition of territorial changes, and the protection of Russian-speaking population.

"We cannot be satisfied with a resolution that fails to fully address Russia's legitimate security interests or to eliminate and prevent future violations of the rights of Russian and Russian-speaking populations," Lavrov told journalists in Moscow on Friday.

Saudi Arabia has acted as a mediator in the Ukraine conflict, having hosted high-



Saudi Arabia has acted as a mediator in the Ukraine conflict, having hosted high-profile talks between US and Russian delegations in February.

profile talks between US and Russian delegations in February.

Moscow has long viewed NATO's eastward expansion as a major threat to national security and has cited Ukraine's ambition to join the US-led military bloc as a key trigger of the current conflict. President Vladimir Putin said last week that Moscow's concerns about NATO activities have

been consistently ignored and met with silence, RT reported.

Lavrov's comments also reflect longstanding concerns about the treatment of Russian-speaking community in Ukraine. Although Russian is the mother tongue of an estimated 33% of the population, the authorities have introduced a series of measures that restrict their rights.

Sri Lanka's ex-minister held on graft charges

AGENCIES
ISLAMABAD

Former minister S M Chandrasena was arrested on Friday by Sri Lanka's anti-graft commission in connection with an ongoing investigation, officials said.

Chandrasena from the north-central region of Anuradhapura, who held the position of Agrarian Services Minister, was arrested by the Commission to Investigate Allegations of Bribery or Corruption, they said.

He was produced before the Colombo Chief Magistrate's Court, which remanded him until July 18.

He has been charged with causing a loss of 25 million Lankan rupees by putting pressure on officials to release maize seeds to farmers as an election inducement in the 2015 presidential election of 2015.

His wife, who was his private secretary, and his younger brother, who was the north central chief min-



ister, were sentenced to 16 years of rigorous imprisonment in April for misappropriation of state resources.

With the arrest of Chandrasena, the island nation has seen its second arrest of a political family.

In mid-June, former health minister Keheliya Rambukwella, his wife, three daughters and a son-in-law were arrested and granted bail by the court. His only son, a former international cricketer, was remanded and released on bail.

The ruling National People's Power in the run-up to last year's elections pledged action to hold to accountability senior politicians accused of wrongdoing.

21 injured in petrol station explosion in Rome

AGENCIES
ROME

At least 21 people were injured after an explosion at a petrol and LPG station in the Centocelle area of Italy's southeast Rome on Friday, causing significant damage to nearby buildings and vehicles, as reported by Euronews.

According to Euronews, citing the Rome fire brigade, the blast occurred around 8:20 am (local time) during a refuelling operation and was reportedly triggered by a technical fault.

While five individuals were hospitalised with minor burns and injuries from shattered glass, none of the injuries were considered serious.

The explosion, which was powerful enough to be heard across the city and seen as a large plume of smoke, also injured residents in nearby apartments, Euronews reported.

Africa, Latin America and Caribbean; Indian PM on his longest foreign trip to strengthen India's pursuit of brighter Global South

In the middle of a turbulent global political landscape, this week will be significant for India's commitment to fostering global peace and security. Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi has embarked on his longest foreign tour, visiting five countries: Ghana, Trinidad and Tobago, Argentina, Brazil, and Namibia. The aim of this journey is to enhance India's bilateral, regional, and multilateral relations with nations and organizations in Latin America, the Caribbean, and Africa. While in Brazil, he will take part in the BRICS annual summit, which is being hosted by Brazil this year. Next year, India will have the honour of hosting the summit that includes BRICS+ nations. Throughout this visit, the primary objective for the Indian Prime Minister is to create oppor-

tunities for strategic partnerships with these countries, focusing on capacity building, defence collaboration, cultural exchanges, digitalization, bolstering counter-terrorism efforts, and advancing the agenda of the Global South to new heights.

The Prime Minister of India commenced his visit in Ghana, where he was warmly welcomed by both the President and the citizens of the nation. While in Accra, the Indian Prime Minister engaged in discussions aimed at enhancing bilateral relations in various sectors including investment, energy, health, security, and capacity building. He also had the privilege of addressing the Parliament of Ghana, which he regarded as an honour for two dynamic democracies. Also, he was awarded the highest civil-

WORLD RECAP

ANSHU JOSHI



ian honour by Ghana. Given its status as a stable and democratic nation, as well as a key member of the African Union and ECOWAS, the West African economic organisation, Ghana is expected to play a crucial role in boosting both bilateral and regional ties for India in Africa. During this important visit, the Indian Prime Minister declared a comprehensive partnership with Ghana and mentioned how the bilateral trade between the two nations has crossed USD 3 billion.

The second subsequent destination was Trinidad & Tobago, a key Caribbean nation. Reflecting on

the profound people-to-people connections, the Indian Prime Minister remarked in his speech upon arriving in Port of Spain that Indians first set foot in Trinidad and Tobago 180 years ago, and this visit seeks to revitalize the unique bonds of heritage and cultural affinity. He also discussed India's developmental trajectory and expressed his view of Trinidad and Tobago as a vital ally in this endeavour. The citizens of Trinidad and Tobago appeared to be deeply moved by his visit, and he was awarded the highest civilian honour from this prominent Caribbean nation as well. It is important

to highlight that Trinidad and Tobago is a prosperous nation with a commendable per capita income. Its primary exports consist of oil and gas, which represent nearly 40% of the GDP and approximately 80% of total exports. Furthermore, given the robust civilizational connections with India, it plays a crucial role in enhancing India's influence in the Caribbean region.

After departing from the Port of Spain, Prime Minister Modi will head to Buenos Aires, marking the first bilateral visit by an Indian Prime Minister to Argentina in nearly sixty years. He has described Argentina as a crucial economic partner in Latin America and a significant ally within the G20. During his discussions with President Javier Milei, the focus will be on several key areas includ-

ing agriculture, essential minerals, energy, trade, tourism, technology, and investment. It is noteworthy that Argentina is part of the Lithium Triangle in Latin America, which is vital for lithium production, and the country actively supports India's advocacy for reforms in the United Nations.

The Prime Minister is set to attend the BRICS Summit taking place in Rio de Janeiro on Sunday this week. He highlighted India's commitment to the forum by clearly mentioning that as a founding member, India is dedicated to BRICS as an essential platform for collaboration among emerging economies. He also made clear that India is working meticulously to foster more peaceful, equitable, just, democratic, and balanced multipolar world order. In addition to his

participation in the summit, he will hold bilateral talks with various global leaders on the sidelines. After the summit, PM Modi will proceed to Brasilia for a state visit, where he will engage in bilateral discussions with Brazilian President Lula da Silva. During this meeting, India and Brazil will evaluate their trade relations, which currently stand at USD 12.2 billion, with the goal of increasing this figure to USD 20 billion. India and Brazil share similar history of colonial rule and have identical national interests. India and Brazil are also working closely in novice areas of international Solar alliance and biofuel alliance.

The concluding segment of the tour will bring the Indian PM to Namibia, which he referred to as a trusted partner with whom India shares a common his-

tory of struggle against colonialism. He is scheduled to meet with President Netumbo Nandi-Ndaitwah to establish a new framework for collaboration and to address the Namibian Parliament.

The Indian PM has conveyed his belief that these visits would reinforce India's bonds of friendship across the Global South, strengthen its partnerships and deepen engagements in multilateral platforms such as the African Union, ECOWAS, CARICOM, and BRICS. Undoubtedly, these visits play a significant role in enhancing bilateral relations by establishing a platform for dialogue, which in turn fosters improved multilateral relations and promotes peace, security, and development.

The author is Professor, School of International Studies, JNU

TRAILER OF 'SARZAMEEN' OUT

TDG NETWORK
MUMBAI

The trailer of Kajol, Prithviraj Sukumaran and Ibrahim Ali Khan-starrer 'Sarzameen' has been unveiled, garnering netizens' attention.

Directed by Kayoze Irani, the film stars Prithviraj Sukumaran as Vijay Menon - a man torn between a father's love and a soldier's duty, Kajol as Meher - a mother who fights against all odds to keep her family intact, and Ibrahim Ali Khan as Harman - a vulnerable young man caught at crossroads.

Excited to present 'Sarzameen' among the audience, Kayoze in a press note said, " Sarzameen is my first feature film as a director and I am incredibly proud of it. This story came to me like a whisper



and quickly became a roar I couldn't ignore. It's emotional, it's intense, and it

asks big questions but at its heart, it's about love, identity, and finding your place

in a messy world. It is resonant of the world today and it captures the complexity of it."

He added, "Directing Kajol Ma'am, Prithviraj Sir and Ibrahim was a surreal experience, they brought so much vulnerability to their characters and that made all the difference."

Prithviraj Sukumaran and Kajol also shared their experience working in the film.

Prithviraj said, "From the moment I read the script of Sarzameen, I knew this was a character I needed to play. It's layered, intense, and speaks to the emotional cost of choices we make in the name of duty and love. Playing this character pushed me in ways I hadn't expected--it challenged my convictions and made me reflect on the weight of silence, loyalty, and truth."

'Raaj Karega Maalik' song unveiled

TDG NETWORK
MUMBAI

Rajkummar Rao starrer 'Maalik' is creating a significant buzz in the entertainment industry with its teasers, trailers and new tracks. The makers have now released a song titled 'Raaj Karega Maalik', which is sung by the MTV Hustle winner MCSquare.

Taking to their Instagram handle, Tips (the official production banner of the film) shared the latest song from 'Maalik', which perfectly resonates with Rajkummar Rao's gangster vibe in the movie.

The music of 'Raaj Karega Maalik' is composed



by Sachin-Jigar and is sung by Akasa. The song comprises a high beat and rage-filled rap by MC Square.

Manushi Chhillar looks

gorgeous as she performs beautifully to the music beats of Sachin-Jigar. In the music video, the duo was also seen dancing together after their indi-

vidual performances.

MC Square's rap and Rajkummar Rao's expressions sync perfectly, creating an adrenaline-rush sequence in the song.



Nora Fatehi poses for her social media. (Instagram)

'Chinki Minki' no more a 'jodi'

TDG NETWORK
MUMBAI

Popular social media influencer sisters Surabhi Mehra and Samriddhi Mehra, also known as Chinki-Minki have announced a professional split.

Famed for their perfect dialogue sync, Chinki-Minki were considered one of the entertaining duos of social media. They jointly created an Instagram account that boasts 12 million followers.

Taking to their Instagram handle, the Mehra sisters announced their split as a jodi and are expected to continue their own content creation journey from now on.

"With a heavy heart, we are parting our ways now, as Jodi. We've decided to explore life on our individual journeys from here on," wrote Surabhi and Samriddhi on Instagram.

With a massive following on Instagram, Surabhi and Samriddhi have created a niche for themselves in the entertainment industry. The news of their professional separation came as a

huge shock to their fans, as per the comment section of the post.

Actor Vishal Jethwa, who is known for his role in 'Mardaani 2' reacted to the post saying "Noooo" accompanied by a heartbreak emoji.

While many were shocked, others speculated on the possibility of a prank by the sisters for their fans. One of the so-

cial media users wrote, "Chinkaaa minkaaa pls say it's a prank!!!! I can't believe it!!!" Another wrote, "Tell me you guys are doing a prank."

There were also a few Instagram users who said sibling separation is becoming a new trend, referencing Amaal Mallik's social media post for his family and brother Armaan Malik.



BRAIN PICKING



Life is not a bed of roses; you have to learn to handle the thorns

—KAJOL
(Indian Actress)

Aamir Khan to attend 16th Indian Film Festival of Melbourne

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

Bollywood actor Aamir Khan will attend the 16th edition of the Indian Film Festival of Melbourne (IFFM) as a chief guest. The festival is set to take place from August 14 to August 25. The film festival organisers announced Aamir's arrival through their Instagram handle on Thursday. Apart from him, the actor-comedian Vir Das will also attend the festival as a guest. "Melbourne, please welcome AAMIR KHAN

for the 16th edition of IFFM. From redefining storytelling in Indian cinema to breaking box office records and pushing creative boundaries with every film--Aamir



Khan stands tall as a legend who has shaped generations of cinegoers," wrote IFFM in the caption section of their announcement post.

IFFM further wrote, "The Indian Film Festival of Melbourne 2025 is proud to welcome this GLOBAL ICON, whose impact goes beyond borders, languages, and genres."

IFFM credits Aamir Khan for sparking national and international dialogue around inclusive education with his culturally impactful film 'Taare Zameen Par'.

Brad on why 'Ford vs Ferrari' didn't come through with Tom Cruise

AGENCIES
WASHINGTON DC

Brad Pitt is currently basking in the success of his recently released film 'F1', which has topped the charts at the international box office. While the rumours of the 'F1' sequel are still rife on the internet, with a possible crossover of Tom Cruise, the actor Pitt revealed why the 'Ford vs Ferrari' didn't happen with him and Cruise in



the lead roles, as reported by Variety. In an earlier interview, 'F1' director Joseph Kosinski revealed that he initially pitched the idea of

Ford vs Ferrari with Brad Pitt and Tom Cruise in the lead roles. However, it didn't see the light of another day due to budget issues with the makers. James Mangold ended up directing 'Ford v Ferrari' with Christian Bale and Matt Damon instead.

In a recent interview Pitt revealed that there was another reason why 'Ford vs Ferrari' didn't feature him and Cruise in lead roles.

REVIEW: METRO IN DINO *****

METRO IN DINO



PRAVEEN NAGDA

Story of infidelity, betrayal, disloyalty, fickleness, and lack of trust arising among couples out of a variety of reasons, including monotony, loneliness, unfulfilled dreams, unrealised aspi-

rations, career struggles, or probably just to explore something outside of the conventional relationships, makes a very good subject. But to tell this in a beautiful musical, lyrical, melodious, and poetic expression could only come from Anurag Basu, and his innovative experiments in the world of cinema.

Metro In Dino (literally - Metro, these days) captures intense romantic encounters and relationship issues between four couples in a comical yet powerful, rhythmic, expressive, and

harmonious musical blend by Pritam. It's a film where the real impact of the story and screenplay is created by its musical narrative and not just the dialogue.

Pankaj Tripathi as Monty and Konkona Sen Sharma as his wife Kajol, Anupam Kher as Parimal and Neena Gupta as his ex-flame Shibani, Ali Fazal as Akash and Fatima Sana Shaikh as his wife Shruti, and Aditya Roy Kapur as Parth and Sara Ali Khan as his partner represent four couples from different age groups, lifestyles, social backgrounds but with a commonness of living in Metro, in contemporary times.

Each couple is gripped

with unique issues in their relationship and is trying to battle out their situations, encountering or escaping the third party, and dealing with not just the mistrust of the other one but also a lot of misunderstanding, miscommunication, and misinterpretation as the story unfolds over four parallel tracks.

Anupam Kher getting drunk is super realistic, Sara Ali Khan getting drunk is funny and rib-tickling, while Konkona Sen Sharma getting drunk is a bit of cacophony, but all of them do it well for their respective roles, adding a touch of seriousness, comedy, and theatrics. Pankaj

Tripathi has delivered a variety of expressions brilliantly in his character, including deep love of a husband, affection of a father, flirtatious behaviours of infidelity, pain and guilt of being disloyal to his partner, and comical misadventures while chasing his love back.

Excellent chemistry between Anupam Kher and Neena Gupta as an old couple, and an outstanding performance by Aditya Roy Kapoor, especially with his long tongue-twister dialogues appearing quite a few times, making you laugh as he charms his way through fellow actors. Sara remains bubbly and vivacious while portraying the

character of a confused individual, who knows her path but not the destination.

You are bound to sink into the melodies crafted by lyricists Amitabh Bhat-tacharya, Qaisar Ul Jafri, Sandeep Shrivastava, Anurag Sharma, Neelesh Misra, and Momin Khan Momin, etc., and the music composed by Pritam Chakraborty. Almost a quarter of the film's run time is full of music, and that drastically elevates the whole story and screenplay, which wouldn't have stood on its own probably.

In a strange narrative, the film probably justifies the infidelity, individual



needs, and self-love coming above everything, almost all through the film. However, in the end, it lands up with a message of falling in love with the same person again and again, in a true Bollywood style.

While it's fun to watch the film, it is the music that will bring you real joy!

Praveen Nagda is Festival Director of KidzCINEMA and CultureCinema Film Festivals

TAKEN: HOW MARRIAGE BECOMES A WOMAN'S SOCIAL SHIELD IN INDIA



NAMRATA KOHLI

WOMAN WISE

“I had to catch a flight once at 6 a.m. ... I came out of the house at 4 a.m. and it was dark. A man started following me; I went back to my house and I missed my flight. The next day I booked the same flight. But I stayed at my male friend's house, and he dropped me off. I need a man”- this wasn't an abla nari speaking but an empowered and financially independent woman... Yes, this is someone with a voice.. We are talking about acclaimed actor Neena Gupta.

This stark anecdote wasn't about romance—it was about basic safety and the instinctive reliance on male presence when public spaces feel unsafe. Neena's

words cut through idealism to highlight a hard truth faced daily by many Indian women.

In India, safety is often not a right—it's a status symbol. And marriage? That's the ultimate credential.

Whether consciously or not, society treats married women as being in a “safe zone.” You're no longer considered available. You're taken. That word does more than define your relationship—it protects your boundaries. Once married, society tends to back off—literally and figuratively. You're “taken,” and that label alone becomes your strongest armour.

It's not just about romantic interest or flirtation. It's about how you're treated everywhere—by the electrician who visits your home, the grocery store guy who insists on chatting a bit too long, the neighbour who stares too freely, or the uncle ji whose eyes linger a little too much. There's an unspoken line they dare not cross when you're someone's wife.

But step outside that role—become widowed, divorced, or simply choose to remain single—and that shield dissolves. Suddenly, you're “available.” You may not be



saying anything with your words, but society projects all kinds of stories onto your silences. A single woman must have a need, a desire, a vulnerability that's up for discussion, analysis—or exploitation.

It's a cruel paradox. The institution that is supposed to offer companionship is also what society uses to determine how much respect, protection, or dignity a woman deserves. You become safe because you're attached to a man. Lose that man, and your vulnerability becomes public property.

This belief is baked into every interaction. It's why single women still hesitate to rent homes alone. Why do landlords ask, “Aapke husband kya karte hain?” before offering you a flat. Why does the local plumber behave differently once he sees a man at home? Why women who've lost their partners are suddenly treated with either suspicion or unsolicited sympathy. The truth is, safety shouldn't be marital-status dependent. A woman shouldn't need a male buffer to earn respect. But in



our society, being someone's wife is still a certificate of legitimacy—and being single is, unfairly, treated as a question mark.

Maybe it's time we flipped that script.

“It's strange,” says Anjali Tiwari, a 34-year-old PR executive. “The same men who were overly friendly when I was single became professionally courteous once I got married. Suddenly, there were no late-night ‘work calls’ or unsolicited compliments. I hadn't changed—but their perception of me had.”

This isn't just anecdotal. According to Dr. Radhika Menon, a Delhi-based sociologist, “In patriarchal societies, a woman is ‘protected’ not by laws, but by her association with a man. Marriage is seen as a proxy for respectability, which in turn influences how much harassment or intrusion she may face. It's deeply flawed, but it's real.”

And yet, women are quietly subverting this equation. More women are choosing singlehood on their own terms. They're installing cameras, hiring staff,

building support systems, and reclaiming their space. They're not waiting for a man to ‘take’ them so they can feel safe.

Counterpoint? Some argue that the perception of safety post-marriage is not just about gender—it's also about structure. With marriage comes routine, stability, and sometimes the presence of a partner at home. But that still doesn't justify why a single woman's dignity should be treated as optional.

Because ultimately, security shouldn't be marital. It should be societal.

That's the heart of the issue, isn't it? Neena Gupta's statement—“I need a man”—is not about dependence, it's a survival strategy in a society where women are conditioned to borrow safety rather than own it.

Changing this requires a multi-pronged, societal shift—not just policy tweaks or moral outrage. We need to normalize women's Independence—Visibly and Loudly. Representation matters. Show more single women, widows, and divorcees thriving without apology in films, media, public life. Create a culture of assertiveness, not invis-

ibility. Too often, women shrink themselves in public to “avoid trouble.” That must flip.

Cities must be planned with women at the center: well-lit streets, gender-neutral public toilets, visible security, reliable last-mile transport. Recalibrate the Legal & Police Machinery. Fast-track harassment and stalking cases, which are currently underreported and under-prosecuted. Train police in gender-sensitivity. Most women don't report threats because they don't want “to create a scene” or face dismissiveness. Make residential societies more inclusive of single women. Ban discriminatory rental practices. Establish women-only complaint redressal cells in workplaces, RWAs, and housing societies.

Stop teaching girls to stay safe by shrinking their lives. Instead, teach boys boundaries, consent, and consequences.

When a woman says she needs a man for protection, she's not endorsing patriarchy—she's surviving it. But a truly safe society is one where no woman has to look over her shoulder. Or reach for a male shield.

Menstrual cycle detox: Ayurvedic panchakarma for hormonal balance



DANNY KUMAR MEENA

Hormonal imbalances can disrupt the natural rhythm of the menstrual cycle, leading to issues such as irregular periods, mood swings, weight gain, fatigue, acne, and even infertility. While modern medicine offers various treatment options, many women are now turning to holistic systems like Ayurveda for long-term solutions rooted in natural healing and balance.

One of Ayurveda's most profound and time-tested approaches to managing hormonal health and restoring menstrual regularity is Panchakarma—a detoxification therapy designed to cleanse the body, balance the doshas, and rejuvenate the mind and body.

AYURVEDA AND HORMONAL HEALTH

According to Ayurvedic philosophy, health depends on the balance of three biological energies or doshas—Vata, Pitta, and Kapha. Hormonal disturbances are often viewed as a result of imbalances in these doshas, compounded by poor digestion, toxin accumulation, stress, and unhealthy lifestyle choices.

In conditions like PCOS (Polycystic Ovary Syndrome) and PCOD (Polycystic Ovarian Disease), doshic imbalances—especially of Kapha and Vata—are commonly observed. These disorders manifest as irregular cycles, ovarian cysts, weight

gain, and skin or hair issues, and may also impact fertility. Ayurvedic management focuses on restoring systemic harmony through diet, lifestyle changes, herbal therapies, and internal detoxification.

WHAT IS PANCHAKARMA?

Panchakarma, meaning “five actions,” is a cornerstone of Ayurvedic treatment aimed at purifying the body and restoring doshic balance. It consists of five



primary procedures:

Vamana (Therapeutic Emesis): Induced vomiting to eliminate excess Kapha and toxins from the upper gastrointestinal tract. Virechana (Therapeutic Purgation): Controlled cleansing of the intestines to expel excess Pitta dosha and detoxify the liver and gallbladder. Basti (Medicated Enema): Administration of herbal decoctions or oils via the rectum to balance Vata dosha, nourish reproductive tissues, and enhance elimination. Nasya (Nasal Therapy): Application of medicated oils or powders through the nostrils to clear toxins from the head and neck region and balance Kapha and Vata.

Raktamokshana (Blood-letting): A traditional blood purification technique used selectively to man-

age Pitta-related disorders. Each therapy is selected based on an individual's constitution (Prakriti), current imbalances (Vikriti), and specific health conditions.

PANCHAKARMA AND MENSTRUAL HEALTH

For women experiencing menstrual irregularities or hormonal imbalances, Panchakarma acts as a reset mechanism. It clears accumulated toxins (ama) that interfere with hormonal



pathways, enhances nutrient absorption, and restores optimal functioning of the endocrine and reproductive systems.

Detoxifying treatments like Virechana and Basti are especially beneficial in managing conditions like PCOS/PCOD, which involve sluggish metabolism and hormonal disruption. Basti, in particular, is known to support the reproductive system and regulate the menstrual cycle by nourishing the deeper tissues (dhatu).

SUPPORTING THE DETOX WITH LIFESTYLE AND DIET

Alongside Panchakarma, Ayurvedic guidelines recommend a supportive diet and lifestyle to maintain hormonal balance:

Include high-fibre foods like vegetables, fruits, legumes, and whole grains to aid digestion and hormonal

regulation.

Reduce intake of sugar, dairy, and processed foods, as these can aggravate Kapha and Pitta doshas and contribute to inflammation and insulin resistance.

Incorporate spices like turmeric, cinnamon, and ginger to improve digestion and support detoxification. Practice stress reduction techniques such as yoga, meditation, and pranayama (breathwork), which help regulate stress hormones and support emotional well-being.

HERBAL SUPPORT IN AYURVEDA

Herbs such as Ashoka, Shatavari, and Ashwagandha are commonly used in Ayurvedic practice to support menstrual and hormonal health. Ashoka is known to ease menstrual cramps and promote cycle regularity. Shatavari nourishes the reproductive system, while Ashwagandha acts as an adaptogen, helping the body cope with stress and balance cortisol levels.

CONCLUSION

Menstrual and hormonal imbalances are complex and multifactorial, but Ayurveda provides a holistic framework to understand and address them. Panchakarma, as a detoxification and rejuvenation protocol, helps cleanse the body of accumulated toxins, balance the doshas, and restore harmony within the endocrine and reproductive systems. When combined with a wholesome diet, mindful lifestyle practices, and herbal support, it offers a sustainable path toward hormonal balance and menstrual well-being.

The author is Founder & CEO at Girlyveda



GUNJAN GOEL

Owning a piece of land or property has long been seen as a symbol of financial security and independence. But for decades, women's stake in real estate — whether through inheritance or investment — has remained limited due to social norms, lack of awareness, and structural barriers. Today, however, a new generation of women is reclaiming this space and rewriting the rules of wealth-building through real estate.

In India, while the law provides equal inheritance

rights to daughters, the reality is that many women still hesitate to claim their share of ancestral property. Cultural conditioning often makes women feel guilty about “asking” for what's legally theirs, fearing family disputes or social backlash. But conversations are changing. Legal experts, financial planners, and women's rights groups are increasingly spreading awareness about property rights, helping women realise that inheritance is not a favour — it's a right.

Beyond inheritance, the bigger shift is in how women view real estate as a means of active wealth creation. More women — from young professionals to self-employed entrepreneurs — are looking at property not just as a home but as an investment asset that can generate rental income, appreciate in value, and offer long-term stability. With

better access to financial literacy resources, women are learning to assess home loans, check developer credentials, and negotiate deals confidently.

Interestingly, developers and banks are also recognising the growing influence of women buyers and investors. Many banks offer concessional interest rates for women home loan applicants. Real estate companies, too, are designing marketing campaigns that speak directly to women, highlighting safety, amenities, and long-term ROI — factors that resonate strongly with female buyers.

However, challenges persist. Lack of knowledge about paperwork, legal loopholes, and the fear of dealing with brokers often hold women back. This is where education and community support play a crucial role. Women-centric property forums, online

webinars, and real estate investment groups are emerging as safe spaces for women to ask questions, learn from peers, and build confidence.

Owning and investing in property gives women more than just an asset; it gives them a voice at the family table and a stronger financial backbone for life's uncertainties. As more women step up to claim their inheritance and make strategic investments, they are not just securing their own future — they're inspiring other women to do the same.

In the coming years, the real estate market is poised to witness the rise of the empowered woman investor — one who knows her rights, trusts her instincts, and believes that owning property is not just about bricks and walls, but about building lasting freedom.

The author is Director, Goel Ganga Developments)

The inner numbness of high-achieving women

DR CHANDNI TUGNAIT

She ticks all the boxes, whether it's promotions, accolades, perfectly structured days, or curated confidence. She's the go-to person, the planner, the achiever. But beneath that poised exterior, many high-achieving women quietly carry something they rarely speak of: a strange, persistent numbness.

It's not sadness. It's not depression. It's a sense of disconnection, from joy, from spontaneity, sometimes even from themselves. And it doesn't show up in breakdowns. It shows up in high-functioning routines, in busy schedules, in achievement after achievement that still doesn't feel like enough. This inner numbness is not a flaw. It's a signal. One that often gets silenced by productivity, perfectionism, and the pressure to keep going.

Dr Chandni Tugnait, MD

(A.M) Psychotherapist, Life Alchemist, Coach & Healer, Founder & Director, Gateway of Healing shares some insights on this inner numbness of high-achieving women. Performing instead of feeling: Many high-achieving women have learned to perform emotions, smiling when exhausted, nodding when uncomfortable, listening when craving space. Their emotional radar becomes attuned to others while they lose touch with their own. They're so used to being who they need to be in the room, they forget to ask: What do I feel in this moment?

Over-functioning as a safety mechanism: When success becomes a survival tool, over-functioning is the default mode. These women don't just meet expectations, they exceed them, repeatedly. They manage teams, homes, friendships, sometimes all at once. But

this constant motion often masks emotional stillness. The body may be moving, but the inner world feels frozen. It's easier to do than to feel. Achievement as a substitute for worth: From an early age, many high-achieving women equated value with performance. Be the top scorer. Be the dependable one. Be the role model. Over time, achievement became their language of love and identity. But when self-worth is tied only to output, anything less than perfect feels like failure, and joy becomes conditional.

Disconnection from pleasure and play: Pleasure often feels inefficient. Play feels irresponsible. And rest? That feels like guilt. In the relentless pursuit of growth, many women forget what it's like to be playful, sensual, creative, without it having to serve a purpose. The ability to feel deeply, to laugh freely, to

rest fully, all become muted in a life built around “doing more.”

Intimacy becomes a performance: This numbness can quietly infiltrate relationships too. Vulnerability requires presence, and when the nervous system is wired for high alert, even love can feel like a task. Conversations become check-ins.

Affection becomes routine. These women are present, but often not fully available, even to those they care about.

Avoiding emotions through busyness: Success gives women the perfect hiding spot. It's easy to mask grief, fear, or loneliness when the calendar is full and the inbox is overflowing.

The author is MD (A.M) Psychotherapist, Life Alchemist, Coach & Healer, Founder & Director, Gateway of Healing

THE RIPPLE EFFECT OF FORGIVENESS



SARAH EAGGER

'To forgive is to set a prisoner free and discover that the prisoner was you'

Lewis B. Smedes

Forgiveness is a powerful spiritual attribute. It is the 'intentional decision to let go of anger and resentment or desire for revenge'. Those who have this beautiful virtue understand the value of freedom, and recognise that the real impact extends far beyond just two individuals.

The Hawaiian people have the understanding that the world we experience is a mirror of what is going on inside us. They have the awareness that we all contribute to whatever is happening to the world and to the self. They have a practice of reconciliation and forgiveness, which means to 'make right' or 'to cor-

rect'. It is a prayer of forgiveness and acceptance and of cleansing the energies.

The name of their prayer is 'Ho'oponopono'. This is the prayer:

I'm sorry – recognise and accept responsibility for what caused the situation, to the one wronged and to the universe.

Please forgive me – a request to make amends, to the higher self and the universe

Thank you – an opportunity to show gratitude to the higher self and the universe.

I love you – is said to the universe as a form of gratitude – for allowing me this earthly experience whereby I learn.

It takes a great deal of strength and humility, especially when we feel as if we are the victim, to be able to say, 'I'm sorry', but this prayer, or attitude, is a way to liberate the soul from the karmic ties that have been created through many lifetimes. For those on a spiritual path, who have become aware that we are originally peaceful beings of light, we begin to understand that if we find ourselves in situations that are difficult, with people who are difficult, we have somehow, somewhere, contributed to what is unfolding. Whatever is

happening is for a reason; there is something to learn, a chance to practise forgiveness, to develop the power to discriminate, a chance to respond differently. There is a very deep significance in difficult situations that inspire us to respond in a higher way. When we forgive, we settle a karmic account. If we do not, we run the risk of perpetuating the account and open the way to more hurt.

Forgiveness is powerful. Research shows that forgiveness reduces stress and anxiety, enhances emotional well-being, improves mental health, increases empathy and compassion, induces better sleep and physical health, gives a greater sense of control and empowerment, enhances social connections and increases the chance of personal growth and transformation. The ripple effect is the impact on the wider community.

Forgiveness is a journey that requires patience, understanding and self-compassion. It is not something that can be resolved just by the words 'I forgive you' unless a deep process has taken place inside first. There has to be an acknowledgement of all the emotions involved, an understanding of all the



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working through the pain, and letting go of resentment.

Meditation helps a great deal in these processes.

Taking time in the early morning to be in silence and calm, can help to integrate the healing and awaken the recognition of what needs to be accomplished and how it can be done. The freedom and lightness of being that follows such a deep practice of forgiving, is the beautiful reward of having had the courage, humility, and self-compassion to begin the journey. 'The weak can never forgive. Forgiveness is the attribute of the strong'

- Mahatma Gandhi
(For further insights and practical steps for moving forward on the journey of forgiveness, you may find this book helpful: "Stillness in the Storm – 7 tools for coping with fear and uncertainty", by Jan Alcoe and Dr Sarah Eagger)
Dr. Sarah Eagger, a long-time practitioner of Rajyoga, is Chair of the Janki Foundation and a retired consultant psychiatrist formerly at Imperial College, London.

Making the journey of life safe



B.K. GEETA

About 90 per cent of all traffic accidents result from mistakes made by drivers, according to studies. Common driver errors include distraction (like texting or talking on the phone), driving under the influence of alcohol or drugs, and reckless driving. Drivers make poor decisions or fail to react correctly in countless situations on the road. Different measures and strategies are in place to reduce driver error and prevent road accidents. These include training courses to teach drivers basic safety rules and responsible driving habits. There are also public awareness campaigns to promote safe driving.

But all that is about accidents on the road. What about the 'accidents' in our lives? They damage our relationships, our health, our careers, and much more. These 'accidents' too result from driver error – loss of control over our thoughts, words, and deeds, acting under the influence of a weakness (such as anger, greed, or pride), and distraction caused by desires. The driver here is the soul, the sentient being who thinks, reasons, and acts. The body is the vehicle, the physical medium through which the soul expresses itself. Just as a car cannot move unless it is started by a driver, the body does not function without the soul. The soul lends life to the body, and consciousness resides in the soul. Ideas, memories, and emotions are rooted in the soul, not the brain. The brain is a physical organ that receives inputs from the sense organs - the eyes, ears, nose, tongue, and the skin. These inputs from the senses are unpredictable, and may change every moment. How does the brain respond to them? It is not programmed to react to



The mishaps in our lives result from loss of control over our thoughts, words, and actions.

the inputs. Had that been the case, the response to one kind of sensory input would always be the same. But that does not happen in real life. When confronted again with a situation

that we had faced years ago, our response is not necessarily the same – it may be informed by our past experience and could be different. The soul is the intelligent entity that makes the

choices which determine how the brain responds to stimuli. Just as a driver decides whether to stop the car or swerve to avoid hitting someone, the soul decides how to respond to dif-

ferent people and circumstances.

But unlike in the case of road accidents, the accidents in our lives are rarely attributed to the driver - the soul. Instead, we look at other people, situations, or even our vehicle, the body, and hold them responsible for our experiences. This is akin to a driver blaming his or her car for an accident, completely absolving themselves of all responsibility. However, this is not surprising. Most people are unaware of the fact that they are souls. The body can be seen and felt, not the soul. So, they think the body is the totality of their existence. The seemingly rationalistic – but rather simplistic – idea that seeing is believing, leads many to ignore or doubt the existence of anything beyond the physical realm. The metaphysical is at best a mystery to them, and at worst a deception. It takes courage, and honesty, to go beyond the physical dimension and explore the field of higher consciousness. The rewards are immense. Recognising our spiritual identity brings under-

standing, and acceptance, of the law of karma. Our actions are seeds that produce the fruit of our experiences. In other words, all that we go through in life – good or bad – is the result of our own karma. This knowledge encourages us to act responsibly, and wisely, fully aware that the consequences of what we do will surely come to us one day. Every action has an equal and opposite reaction, is a guiding principle for building a happy life. If we ensure that our actions are good, beneficial, charitable, then their karmic return will be of the same quality. When I, the soul, live with this awareness, then the journey of my life is free from accidents. There might be some mishaps on the way, but when I remember that they are the result of karmic accounts from the past, I am able to take them in my stride and continue my journey without fuss. Others can also learn from me the basics of safe 'driving', and cruise happily through the journey of life.
B.K. Geeta is a Rajyoga teacher at the Brahma Kumaris headquarters in Abu Road, Rajasthan.

The invisible



WENDY FARRINGTON

Everything that you find in the room where you are sitting, except the plants, starts in the invisible. A human mind had to think of a chair, table, or even a cushion. They had to think of it first, work out how to go about building it in the best way, and then try it. So, the start of the chair was in the mind, the invisible. We are also influenced or guided by the invisible. Our mind elaborates in the invisible and then decides and goes into action. The deci-

sion or choice is also taken invisibly. We ourselves, as energy, soul, and spirit are invisible. The physical body is visible. It belongs to matter. It responds through the sense organs and communicates what it feels, sees, or hears to the soul. The future is also invisible. I have hope that the future will be good. I have this faith along with other elements of faith in accordance with my beliefs. All of this is invisible. We are, however, very concentrated on matter and the physical world. A great part of our lives is focused on the invisible. Think of peace, joy, love, and hope. And the great One, God. Are there sense organs that recognize the invisible? If we compare ourselves with animals, they have very well-developed sense organs allowing them to hear ultrasonic sounds. Their sense of smell can be trained



A great part of our lives is focused on the invisible - peace, joy, love, hope, and God.

to alert humans of specific medical issues, as well as de-

tect hidden drugs. Worms, dogs, and other animals

can sense earthquakes long before they begin. They

can sense vibrations of fear from us and 'perceive' many things we don't. Dogs, for example, just know how we feel about them. They know when they are loved. The quality of our emotional life depends on the invisible. My spiritual sensitivity will allow me to understand myself and others. The more I develop my spiritual intelligence, the more I become alert to vibrations. How much do I know about myself, the soul, the spirit, the part that is invisible? How well can I accurately discern what is going on inside? Can I precisely evaluate people by their body language, facial expressions, and vibrations? Can I discern my motivations, like kindness, selfishness, and charity, and those of others? Can I respond in the best way possible, like the example of Michelle Obama telling her daughter upon observing the bad be-

haviour of another person: "When they go low, we go high!"? Can I understand the difference between limited satisfaction and happiness? An unselfish gesture can make a lasting impact on someone. It has been discovered that people who work in voluntary organizations that help other people unselfishly, gain benefits such as stronger immune systems. Man has always looked for a connection with God, the Ultimate Invisible! It is necessary to fully develop our awareness of the invisible to connect with Him. The invisible is very real. Maybe it is to be trusted even more than what we can physically see. *Wendy Farrington is a former choreographer and member of the Olympic Ski Team GB, currently based in Rome. She is part of the national co-ordinating team for Brahma Kumaris activities in Italy.*

A THOUGHT FOR TODAY

Sometimes I get caught up in thinking I am the sum of everything I do, that my actions define me. By getting caught up in worrying about each of my actions and its impact, I forget about who I am. When I remember I am a BEING of peace, my actions will be filled with the peaceful energy of my being. Then my pure intentions will carry each action to a positive outcome. Today let me remember who I truly am - a human being, not a human doing.

GUKESH OUTWITS CARLSEN, LEADS ‘SUPER UNITED RAPID AND BLITZ’

AGENCIES
ZAGREB

World champion D Gukesh let his moves do the talking as he scored another impressive win over world number one Magnus Carlsen to grab the sole lead after six rounds of the Super United Rapid and blitz chess tournament here.

Counting the opening day victories, the win against Carlsen late on Thursday was Gukesh's fifth consecutive triumph in the tournament and took him to 10 points out of a possible 12.

With just three rounds to come in rapid section, Gukesh enjoys two points lead over nearest rival Duda Jan-Krzysztof of Poland. Wesley So of United States is in sole third spot on seven points, a full point clear of Carlsen, Anish Giri of Holland and local hero Ivan Saric.

R Pragganandhaa shares the seventh spot on five points with American Fa-



biano Caruana, while Alireza Firouzja of France is in ninth spot on four points. Nodirbek Abdusattorov of Uzbekistan is 10th on just three points.

Carlsen has never minced his words and has been a critic of Gukesh in the faster

version of the game.

The World number one had infamously banged the table after his previous loss to Gukesh in the Norway chess tournament. That was the Indian's first victory over the world number one in Classical chess.

The victory as black was sweet for Gukesh.

Carlsen enjoyed some optical advantage after his king pawn opening but the day belonged to Gukesh who found the perfect counter play.

At some point Carlsen had

to part with two minor pieces for a rook and a couple of extra pawns that looked menacing.

However, Gukesh calmly exploited Carlsen's bad plan with the clock ticking away and the famous victory was scored after 49 moves.

Earlier in the day, Gukesh had beaten Abdusattorov and Caruana with some fine efforts.

Pragganandhaa's search for an elusive victory continued as he played out three draws with Caruana, Carlsen and Giri. Pragganandhaa will need some victories on the final day to make a comeback in the tournament.

Standings after round 6: 1. D Gukesh (Ind, 10); 2. Duda Jan-Krzysztof (Pol, 8); 3. Wesley So (Usa, 7); 4-6: Ivan Saric (Cro); Magnus Carlsen (Nor); Anish Giri (Ned) 6 each; 7-8: Fabiano Caruana (Usa); R Pragganandhaa (Ind) 2 each. 9. Alireza Firouzja (Fra, 4); 10. Nodirbek Abdusattorov (Uzb, 3).

Siraj strikes twice before Smith smashes sensational hundred

AGENCIES
BIRMINGHAM

India pacer Mohammed Siraj struck twice in as many balls but Jamie Smith swung the momentum back in England's favour with a counter-attacking hundred as the hosts raced to 249 for five at lunch on day three of the second Test here on Friday. Despite the swash-buckling effort from Smith (102 batting off 82 balls), England remain far away from India's 587 all out.

Smith smashed a memorable hundred in less than a session and Harry Brook (91 batting off 127) was on course to reach three figures at the break.

Strikingly, England hammered 172 runs in 27 overs in the first two hours of play.

Resuming the day at 77 for three, England lost half their side in the second over of the morning session when Siraj had Joe Root (22) and Ben Stokes (0) caught behind.

Root's was a soft dismissal as he got faint tickle down the leg side while Stokes was surprised to get a sharply



rising ball first up.

England were reduced to 84 for five but Smith and Brook continued to attack and put pressure back on the opposition.

Prasidh Krishna was brought in to implement the short ball plan with six fielders on the leg side but that failed as Smith got the better of him in the 12th over of the morning that yielded 23 runs. Four boundaries and a six over deep square leg came in that eventful over.

India persisted it with Krishna, whose following over went for 11. His figures after the session read 8-0-61-0.

It is not often that Brook is outscored but it happened on Friday as Smith relentlessly attacked the Indian bowlers.

Smith also did not allow spinners Ravindra Jadeja and Washinton Sundar get into any sort of rhythm. Sundar was driven for back-to-back fours by Smith in his first two balls before the wicket-keeper batter collected a six and a four from Jadeja in the following over.

Smith got to his second Test hundred off 80, the third fastest by Englishman, with consecutive fours off Jadeja in the last over before lunch

Wimbledon: Naomi Osaka loses to Anastasia Pavlyuchenkova

AGENCIES
LONDON

Naomi Osaka might be more comfortable on grass courts these days but she will once again leave Wimbledon in the third round after a 3-6, 6-4, 6-4 loss to Anastasia Pavlyuchenkova on Friday.

Osaka is a former No. 1 now ranked 50th and a four-time Grand Slam champion, all on hard courts — she won the U.S. Open and Australian Open twice apiece.

Osaka arrived at the All England Club this year having lost three of her last four matches at the place and with a career record of 5-4 there. Her best showing was getting to the third round in 2017 and 2018; she missed the tournament in 2021, 2022 and 2023.



From 4-all in the third set, Pavlyuchenkova grabbed eight of the match's last 10 points, holding at love, then breaking in the final game with the help of a trio of forehand unforced errors by Osaka. "A majority of you

were cheering for Naomi, but that's OK," Pavlyuchenkova, who turned 34 on Thursday, told the crowd at Court No. 2. "I'm mentally tough, so that didn't bother me at all. The opposite: It gave me energy." Pavlyuchenkova,

who is ranked 53rd, was the 2021 runner-up at the French Open, and Friday's victory moved her into the fourth round at Wimbledon for the first time since she was a quarterfinalist nine years ago.

Revival of international athletics will be big boon for Indian athletes

RUPINDER SINGH
NEW DELHI

After a long time of 29 years, international athletics is coming back in grand style on July 5 as Kanteerava Stadium in Bengaluru is all set to host the Neeraj Chopra Classic in javelin throw.

Later next month on August 10, India is set to host a full-scale World Intercontinental Bronze event in Bhubaneswar. This will give a boost to Indian athletics as in the current scenario only very few athletes have been exposed to international competition.

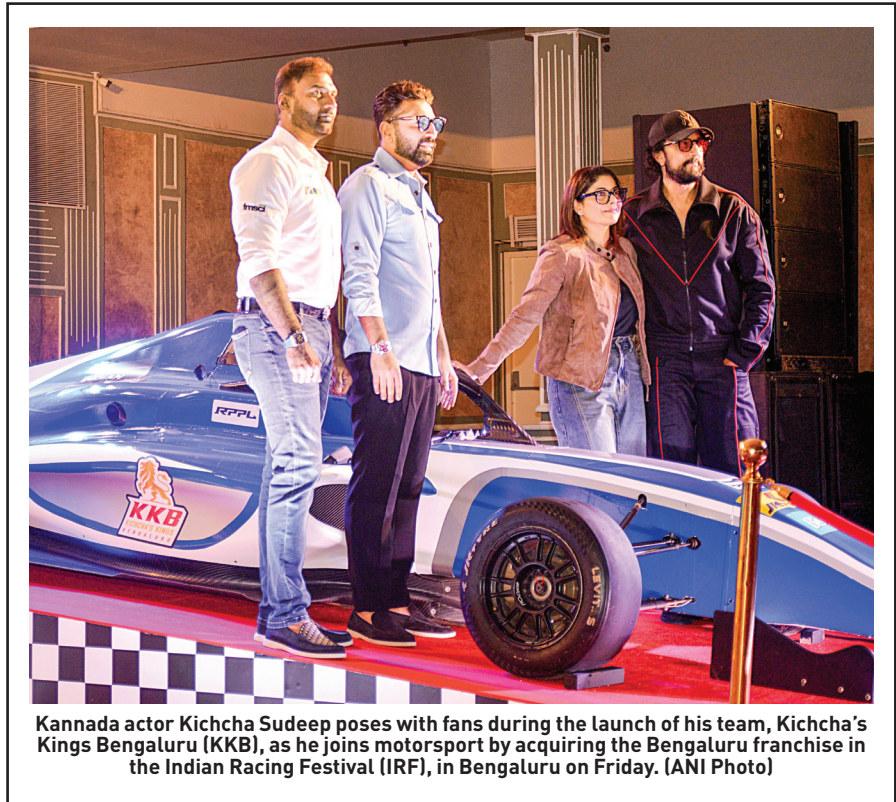
Take for example the Neeraj Chopra Classic. Only Neeraj has had the experience of competing



internationally regularly. Four other javelin throwers — Sachin Yadav, Rohit Yadav, Yashvir Singh, and Sanjay Sahiwal — will be exposed to an internation-

al event in the Bronze meet in Bhubaneswar, so one of the young throwers is likely to qualify for the World Championships in Tokyo to be held in September 2025. We could thus realistically expect India to become a regular stronghold even after Neeraj Chopra retires in the future.

Moreover, if the international competition in Bhubaneswar also invites good international athletes, we are in for some great performances in many events. Indian athletics can only get better if these events are held regularly. One look at the IPL being held for 18 years could show us how much such events will boost the careers of athletes.



Kannada actor Kichcha Sudeep poses with fans during the launch of his team, Kichcha's Kings Bengaluru (KKB), as he joins motorsport by acquiring the Bengaluru franchise in the Indian Racing Festival (IRF), in Bengaluru on Friday. (ANI Photo)

AGENCIES
LONDON

Two-time Grand Slam semifinalist Ben Shelton needed all of about a minute and exactly four points — three of which were aces — to wrap up a 6-2, 7-5, 6-4 victory over Rinky Hijikata on Friday in a second-round Wimbledon match suspended the night before because of darkness at 5-4 in the third set.

"Very different playing over two days and coming out for whatever that was — 55 seconds? — today," the 10th-seeded Shelton said. "I was hoping to maybe hit a few groundstrokes today. I might have to go to the practice courts."

The American, who



reached the final four at the 2023 U.S. Open and this year's Australian Open,

was about to try to serve out the match on Thursday at 9:30 p.m. when action

was halted at No. 2 Court, which does not have a roof or artificial lights. They came back out to the same stadium a little less than 16 hours later and, after a warmup period that was quite a bit longer the resumption of actual play, Shelton began with a 141 mph ace.

The 22-year-old left-hander then hit a second serve that resulted in a framed return by Hijikata, followed with an ace at 140 mph and one more at 118 mph to end things quickly.

"You come out here, serving for the match, the nerves are there a little bit. To hit three aces and take the pressure off of myself, I couldn't have been happier with what I came out here

and did," said Shelton, who will face 105th-ranked Marton Fucsovics of Hungary for a chance to reach the fourth round at the All England Club for the second consecutive year.

Shelton told the crowd: "I'm sorry that you guys didn't really get to see much tennis."

Right before things were halted Thursday, Shelton held three match points while leading 5-3 and at love-40 on Hijikata's serve. But but the 87th-ranked Hijikata grabbed the next five points to extend the contest.

Shelton faced only three break points against Hijikata, saving all of them.

"A great match," he said. "A clean match."

Disappointing start for Indian women golfers in Irish Open

AGENCIES
KILDARE

The Indian quartet got off to a disappointing start at the KPMG Irish Open and all of them will need a low second round effort to make the cut in a month that is full of high-profile events on the Ladies European Tour.

Tvesa Malik had the best score among the four with 1-over 74 at the par-73 Carton House golf course.

She was lying on tied-86th, though a good number

of players were yet to finish their opening round.

Diksha Dagar, who has ensured her place in the AIG Women's Open, and rookie Avani Prashanth shot 2-over 75 each and were Tied-105th.

Hitaashee Bakshi was 3-over through five holes.

The leader was Chiara Tamburlini was at 6-under with five birdies on the back nine, which was her first nine. She added one more birdie on the first and dropped her only bogey on



the third and closed with a birdie on the ninth, her closing birdie.

Four players, Hannah Screen (Eng), Lisa Pettersson (Swe), Madalene Sagstrom (Swe) and Mimi Rhodes (Eng) are tied second at 68 each.

Tvesa Malik, who was in the first group to tee off from the first hole, had a fine start with two birdies in the first four holes, but then followed up with six pars before she dropped a bogey on the 11th.

Pungni Tara clinches silver in Asian Youth C'ships

AGENCIES
ASTANA

Indian lifter Pungni Tara delivered a commendable performance to clinch the silver medal in the youth girls 44kg contest at the Asian Youth and Junior Weightlifting Championships here on Friday.

Tara lifted a total of 141kg (60kg+81kg) on the opening day of the tournament.

Her 81kg clean and jerk effort fetched her the gold

Tara lifted a total of 141kg (60kg+81kg) on the opening day of the tournament.

medal in the section. Her 81kg clean and jerk effort fetched her the gold medal in the section.

Medals are awarded separately for snatch, clean and jerk, and total lift in continental, World Cups and World Championships.